

Friday, March 5, 1999

Turkey
warns
Greece
over PKK
support

Last prisoners in Kuwait return

AMMAN (AFP) — The last eight Jordanian prisoners held in Kuwait arrived home on Friday after being pardoned last month by Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah. The seven men and one woman, held for collaboration with Iraq during the August 1990 to February 1991 occupation of Kuwait, were welcomed at Amman's airport by members of their families. They were pardoned along with about 300 other prisoners to mark the eighth anniversary of the Feb. 26, 1991 liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi occupation.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي

Volume 24 Number 7087

AMMAN SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 1999, DHUL QADDAH 21, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 Fils

Disputed Bosnian town declared neutral district

SARAJEVO (AFP) — The Serb-held town of Brcko in northeastern Bosnia was declared a neutral district Friday by an international panel seeking to resolve post-war Bosnia's biggest bone of contention. An arbitration tribunal set up under the 1995 Dayton peace accords decided to create the Brcko district of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which will have its own multi-ethnic administration and assembly, according to the ruling released here. The announcement came after the top international mediator for Bosnia, Carlos Westendorp, fired Bosnian Serb President Nikola Poplasen who had warned of reprisals if the panel decided against annexing the town to the Bosnian Serb Republic. At a news conference here, Westendorp sought to reassure Bosnian Serbs, saying they will continue to have full access to Brcko, which provides a strategically vital link to the western and eastern parts of the Serb Republic.

Kosovo talks to resume in Paris

PARIS (R) — A second round of Kosovo peace negotiations between Serbian and ethnic Albanian delegations is scheduled to take place in Paris from March 15, a spokesman at the French foreign ministry said on Friday. An initial round of talks at Rambouillet near Paris ended last month with only a partial political deal, and the six-nation contact group told the two parties to return to France for fresh talks within three weeks.

One killed in Italian university shooting

PADUA (AP) — A university employee in the northern Italian city of Padua shot and killed one of his union officials and wounded two other people on campus Friday. Mariano Molon, a 45-year-old lab technician, surrendered to authorities. Molon reportedly had been facing disciplinary action for problems on the job. Italian media said the three victims were shot as they met to discuss his case. Molon used a gun taken from his father's house, investigators said.

Florida undertaker cut hand from corpse for voodoo

BRADENTON (R) — A Florida jury on Friday found a former funeral home director guilty of abusing a human body after she cut the hand from a corpse as part of a voodoo ritual. The Manatee County Circuit Court jury of three men and three women convicted Paula Albritton, 45, after a three-day trial. Her son, Jimmie Clark, 23, pleaded no contest to the same charge last year and is serving a one-year sentence. The left hand of Willie Suttle was found on the bank of the Manatee River in November 1997 and was identified by fingerprints. When his body was exhumed, dolls and notes were found in his coffin.

Fire in Danish silo in fourth month

COPENHAGEN (AP) — Firefighters in the Danish town of Esbjerg don't rush to their biggest fire anymore. They just stop by once in a while to see if it's still burning. Denmark's largest silo, used mainly to store wood, has been smoldering for four months, and there seems to be little chance of extinguishing the slow burn that started Nov. 5. "We come over a few times a week when the smoke gets too heavy and frown down the silo," said Christian Holst, director of the local civil defence unit.

King names Rawabdeh to head new government

New Cabinet mandated with strengthening economy, fighting poverty, unemployment

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — New Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh heads a technocratic government without an apparent agenda for internal democratic changes but well-equipped to deal effectively with the country's dire economic problems, political sources said Friday. Officials and analysts said the new premier, who served as a minister in five previous governments and as a deputy in the last three parliaments, will work towards deepening democracy, but he is not expected to introduce democratic reforms or scrap the controversial elections and press laws — a key demand of the opposition.

"From an exclusively political point of view, this government is a disappointment, because it will not bring about much-awaited democratic changes," said a former prime minister.

"But it is a strong, capable government that will be very active and productive at the internal level, especially in the economy and administration," he said. "They will not sit on the files."

His Majesty King Abdullah's decision on Thursday to accept the resignation of former Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh surprised many officials, who expected a government change to take place either after the end

of the ordinary session of Parliament, on March 28, or after the May 17 Israeli elections.

King Abdullah on Thursday also appointed former Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti as Royal Court chief, accepting the resignation of Jawad Anani.

Kabariti, a liberal who has close relations with the Gulf states and served as foreign minister, spearheaded economic reforms during his 1996-1997 mandate as premier.

Rawabdeh and Kabariti have in common a long experience in state affairs and strong personalities, although observers warned that their views have in the past differed on certain issues, such as relations with the Iraqi regime.

King Abdullah entrusted the first government to be sworn in during his reign with "rejuvenating the national economy in cooperation with the various forces and the private and public sectors."

King Abdullah stressed that states that have welcomed the idea, in particular several Gulf countries, "are two major concerns for the country, impeding the process of growth and adversely affecting the nation's capability."

He urged the new government to "act promptly, seriously, and in accordance with a clear plan to replace guest workers with local people and speed up the process of export-



His Majesty King Abdullah stands with the new government of Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh following the swearing-in ceremony on Thursday (Photo by Youssef Allan)

ing Jordanian workers to Arab states that have welcomed the idea," in particular several Gulf countries.

The King also entrusted Rawabdeh to wage war against nepotism, corruption, negligence, and incompetence in the public sector by modernising and trimming the country's bloated bureaucracy.

On the regional and international level, the King asked the new Cabinet to bol-

ster inter-Arab ties with no exceptions, reiterating that Jordan will not interfere in Iraq's internal affairs and will fight for the lifting of the embargoes against Iraq, Libya and Sudan.

The King reiterated his late father King Hussein's creed that peace with Israel is a "strategic option" for Jordan and the whole Arab World.

"We seek just and durable peace for all on all tracks, based on justice, international

legitimacy, and international charters. We believe in peace as a means for security, stability and development," he said.

Officials yesterday stressed that there will be no changes in foreign policy and relations with Israel.

"But there will be a change of style," one Cabinet member told the Jordan Times, declining to elaborate.

(Continued on page 3)

Cabinet members in Rawabdeh government

AMMAN (J.T.) — Following is a list of the members in the government of Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, who was sworn in as prime minister on Thursday.

Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh — Prime Minister
Minister of Defence
Marwan Hmoud — Deputy Prime Minister
Rima Khalaf — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning
Ayman Majali — Deputy Prime Minister
Jamal Sarayreh — Minister of Transport, Telecommunications, and Post
Abdul Salam Abbadi — Minister of Religious Affairs
Tawfiq Kreishan — Minister of Municipal, Rural, Environmental and Parliamentary Affairs
Abdul Ilah Khatib — Minister of Foreign Affairs
Nasser Lawzi — Minister of Information
Mohammad Mamsar — Minister of Youth and Sport
Akel Biltaji — Minister of Tourism and Antiquities
Nayef Qadi — Minister of Interior
Michel Marto — Minister of Finance
Eid Fayed — Minister of Labour
Izzat Jaradat — Minister of Education and Higher Education
Hashem Shboul — Minister of Agriculture
Suleiman Abu Alim — Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources
Kamel Mahadin — Minister of Water and Irrigation
Hamzeh Haddad — Minister of Justice
Faisal Rafua — Minister of Social and Administrative Development
Ishaq Maraga — Minister of Health
Hosni Abu Gheida — Minister of Public Works and Housing
Mohammad Asfour — Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply

Media policy changes low on new government's agenda, analysts say

By Amy Henderson

AMMAN — Of the 20 items listed in the new government's agenda, changes in the media ranked only tenth, indicating that further reform in that sector, including amendments to the controversial press law, will take a back seat to more pressing economic reforms, journalists and analysts said yesterday.

"My general impression is that people will be raising this issue," said the director of the nascent Arab Media Institute, Osama Magdadi. "And I think both the prime minister and the information minister have an interest in this issue, but because there are so many pressing priorities, this one unfortunately cannot be the first one."

The government's mandate very clearly is to grapple with the wavering economy, paring down the burdensome public sector bureaucracy while alleviating poverty and unemployment. References to the media, in addition to being low on the agenda, were short and to the point, and did not address a change to the press law.

"Our national media needs constant attention so that it truly reflects the country's image," His Majesty King Abdullah wrote in his letter of designation to Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh. "Jordan is in need of an efficient media that spreads awareness and national guidance and that can convey Jordan's message to the world through a free and responsible press, characterised by seriousness, balance and credibility."

"We need broadcasting services that are open to the nation's affairs and reflect its actual situation regardless of various people's views and thoughts. This should occur within a framework of freedom and responsible expression that does not damage the country's image or its democracy. We require a media that can reflect awareness and positive criticism."

Journalists had hoped the restrictive press law — enacted in July by a Parliament under executive pressure — would be higher on the agenda. Hopes for a change to the law and the government's information policy have lingered since a government change last August. Parliamentary strings last November suggested that an effort to amend the law was imminent, but the effort was put on hold during the holidays, and further delayed due to the passing away of King Hussein.

With Parliament set to recess in March and a new government setting into office, journalists say, any renewed attempt to change the law will be further postponed.

But the fact that there was no direct reference to the law has not doused expectations that an amendment is still possible. The government change itself is not an unwelcome one among the press, many of whose members regard some personalities in the new government as liberals, or, at the very least, sympathetic with the press over its most recent setback.

Judging from the former track records of Prime Minister Rawabdeh, Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabariti and Information Minister Nasser Lawzi, the relationship between government and press will be a

smooth one, journalists say.

"Rawabdeh did try to put the breaks on the government's rush to enact the law last summer," said Nidal Mansour, chief editor of Al Hadath weekly newspaper and a board member of the Jordan Press Association (JPA). "Lawzi is a very liberal person, and the existence of Kabariti has played a role in supporting the media both in his post as former prime minister and in the Senate. The men will have a positive influence that will, I think, translate into a reconsideration of some articles in the law."

The prime minister, also a Lower House deputy representing the Irbid governorate, spoke adamantly in the Lower House this summer against many articles in the press law. He aroused press and public alike when he advocated dropping an article in the law requiring journalists to be accurate in their reporting, arguing that journalists must have access to all information before being required to attain accuracy.

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ly voted for the law, but not without many reservations, said a source close to the prime minister.

Information Minister Lawzi has enjoyed good relations with the press since his first posting as minister during the Kabariti government. That government, known for its liberal tendencies, attempted to reform official information policy and began dismantling the information ministry with a view to leaving in its stead an information bureau and government spokesperson. It also drafted its own press law which even the JPA regarded as "too liberal." But the government was dismissed before the law was voted on in Parliament.

"These factors will work favourably for the press," said JPA President Seif Sherif, who added that Rawabdeh, a known political powerhouse, enjoys enough clout to play with a political hot potato if he wants or has to.

"It may take a few months for movement to happen, but I'm optimistic that it will," Sherif said.

Another important, but more subtle, appointment in favour of the press is the appointment of Hamzeh Haddad as justice minister, said Nabil Sherif, chief editor of the Arabic daily Al Dustour.

"He has written very critical articles of the law in the press," he said. "Someone in that position is a very encouraging sign."

In lieu of little imminent change, journalists said that the best they can expect is that the government will go easy on the press, distancing itself from the restrictive legislation much the same as the Tarawneh government did and opting for what has been dubbed "soft implementation" of the law.

"The government needs an open relationship with the press," said Jamil Nimri, a columnist at Al Arab Al Yawm. "They will maintain one either by desire, or by necessity because they cannot afford to look bad. The world is watching [Jordan] now, and they won't wage war, even if they were so inclined."

Activists optimistic Rawabdeh administration will further women's rights

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Jordanian women activists expressed optimism on Friday that the first government formed by His Majesty King Abdullah will give women a higher public profile and amend discriminatory legislation. They took heart in the appointment of Rima Khalaf as Jordan's first ever woman deputy premier, who also takes charge of the important planning portfolio in the government of Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, named by King Abdullah on Thursday.

In a strongly-worded letter to Prime Minister Rawabdeh and his 22-member team, King Abdullah called on the Cabinet to work hard to boost the role of women, whom he referred to as a basic pillar of the country's development.

In turn, Rawabdeh, a father of 11, pledged to pay "special care and attention to women's issues." But he did not go into details.

"The role of women has developed through their participation in the country's economic, social, political and administrative life and this role needs

the utmost care, especially in the badia and rural areas," the King told Rawabdeh.

King Abdullah, who took the Throne on Feb. 7 when his father King Hussein died of cancer, also asked the first Cabinet sworn-in under him to amend any laws that "discriminate against the rights of women and inflict injustice on women."

However, the monarch did not specify these laws.

Women activists have for years been calling for amendments to laws that include discriminatory articles against women, especially those dealing with social security, citizenship and retirement as well as those that give reduced sentences to males who kill their female relatives on suspicion of involvement in "immoral" relations.

While men have full rights to claim the social security benefits of their spouses, the family of a working woman who dies is not allowed to benefit from her social security. In addition, Jordanian women who marry foreign men cannot pass on Jordanian citizenship to their husbands and children.

"We could not have asked for any

better [from King Abdullah]," said Amal Sabbagh, secretary general of Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), a main platform chaired by HRH Princess Basma, the country's main champion of women's rights.

"It is obvious that His Majesty appreciates the role of women and wants to ensure that there are no obstacles hindering their advancement," Sabbagh told the Jordan Times.

"As far as I can remember, this is the first letter of designation that specifically calls for removing discrimination against women from our legislation."

Sabbagh said the King's policies on women, as mentioned in the speech, "will reinforce the mandate of the JNCW in developing [non-discriminatory] legislation, as we are sure that the government will now be more responsive to our recommendations."

Nawal Faour, a member of the influential Islamic Action Front (IAF), the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, said the new government has to adopt clear decisions and media policies that address the issues of women in an effective and "sincere manner."

"The King has clearly emphasised the need to amend all legislation hindering the advancement of women. The new government should take this issue seriously and embark on well-studied steps," Faour told the Jordan Times.

"Women are looking forward to a clearer set of executive decisions made by the government, including a media policy that adopts women causes in all fields. So far, we have felt that none of the previous governments gave us the attention we deserve."

Women activists have for years been calling for changes to Article 340 of the Jordanian Penal Code which exempts or reduces punishment for individuals convicted of murdering their female relatives in what has become locally known as "honour crimes."

King Hussein, Her Majesty Queen Noor, HRH Princess Rania, the wife of King Abdullah, and several other Royal family members have stepped up criticism against the abuse and exploitation of women and called for amending legislation that harms women's rights.

Weeks before King Hussein passed

away, Queen Noor called for establishing clearer moral and legal definitions of what should constitute a crime of honour and for determining obstacles barring the judiciary from meting out tough sentences against perpetrators.

However, most past governments have so far turned a blind eye to such demands because of the cultural sensitivity of the issue in a patriarchal society.

"The King's message is clear. He is calling for an end to all forms of discrimination against women, and this is a very positive step," said lawyer Asma Khader, a veteran women's rights activist.

"But what is more important is for the government to take concrete and serious steps in that direction," she added.

Khader said a special committee is revising the current legislation, including Article 340 of the Jordanian Penal Code which reduces sentences against males convicted of killing their female relatives.

(Continued on page 3)

Senate approves development fund name change

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Senate recently approved the amendment of the article of the law pertaining to the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development, as issued by the Lower House of Parliament, a Royal Court statement said Friday.

The amendment consists of a change in the title of the fund, which shall be renamed "The Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development." This change was requested by HRH Princess Basma, chairperson of the Fund's Board of Trustees.

The Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development has been named to honour the legacy of the Hashemites, who dedicated their lives to the development of Jordan. The new title honours the memory of King Hussein who, as one of the great humanitarians of our time, maintained that "people are our most precious asset," the statement said.

The Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development bears testament to King Hussein's vision and dedication to a process of sustainable development, with people at its heart.

After two decades of playing a central role in the development of Jordan, the fund's new name reaffirms its commitment to the service of the country, in the spirit of dedication inspired by King Hussein's leadership.

The Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development will continue to work as a national non-governmental organisation, which reflects its Jordanian heritage and identity. The new name also upholds international concepts of development, which have witnessed a shift from a welfare approach to one which seeks to promote sustainability and self-reliance.

"People are our most precious asset," has been chosen by Princess Basma as the Arabic motto which symbolises the fund's future efforts, the statement said.

Domestic politics puts U.S. aid for Central America, Jordan in doubt

WASHINGTON (R) — Republicans and Democrats sparred on Thursday over how to pay for \$1 billion in U.S. aid for hurricane-battered Central America and recession-hit Jordan.

Republican leaders in the House of Representatives and the Senate told appropriators to propose spending cuts, otherwise known as offsets, to pay for the emergency aid, which includes \$956 million for Central American and Caribbean nations, and \$100 million for Jordan.

Aides said Republican members of the Senate Appropriations Committee were looking to reduce funding for a wide variety of federal programmes, including food

stamps for poor Americans, and environmental initiatives favoured by Vice President Al Gore, the Democratic party's likely nominee in the 2000 presidential campaign.

As expected, congressional Democrats objected to the proposed cuts, raising doubts about the entire package. Clinton is scheduled to arrive in Nicaragua on March 8 to begin a tour of hurricane Mitch's damage throughout the region.

Clinton has also asked Republican-controlled Congress to rush an extra \$100 million in extra aid this year to Jordan to boost the military and the battered economy following the death of King Hussein last month.

The \$100 million for 1999 is part of the administration's request for \$300 million over the next three years. This assistance would be over and above the \$225 million Jordan receives from Washington in annual economic and military assistance.

Aides said more than \$152 million in U.S. farm relief was also in jeopardy because appropriators planned to add that to the foreign aid bill.

Further complicating chances of success is the Senate Appropriations Committee approval Thursday of a controversial tobacco amendment, which will be attached to the broader package to aid Central American countries and Jordan.

The amendment must still be approved by the full Senate and the House of Representatives. But by attaching it to the Central America and Jordan package, proponents of the bill hope to speed that process.

Over objections from Democrats, the Senate Appropriations Committee said it would vote on the aid package, along with the controversial offsets, later this week.

Republicans need some measure of unity to pass any appropriations bill, especially in the House, where they hold a razor-thin 222-211 majority over Democrats.

If a compromise is not found, the bill might die on the floor of the House or the Senate, aides said.



Security officers Friday stand at the entrance of the emergency unit of Hacettepe hospital in Ankara following the arrival of Ayhan Cevik, governor of Cankiri, 80 km northeast of Ankara, who was seriously wounded in a car bomb attack. Three people, including a young child, were killed and eight others were injured in attack (AP photo)

Three killed, 10 hurt in Turkish bomb attack

ANKARA (AFP) — Three people were killed and 10 others, including a provincial governor, were wounded in a car bomb attack Friday in a central Turkish town, responsibility for which was claimed by a radical left-wing organisation.

A leftist organisation, TIKKO (the Turkish Peasants' and Workers' Liberation Army), has claimed responsibility for the attack. Turkish police chief Necati Bilican said.

The bomb was detonated by remote control in the town of Cankiri as a car carrying Cankiri Governor Ayhan Cevik was passing by. Deputy Governor Ismet Akkol told Anatolia News Agency.

The stolen car, with a fake number plate, was parked in front of a shop selling gas canisters. Akkol said the incident happened at 8:30 a.m.

The fatalities comprised one of Cevik's bodyguards, a primary school student and a worker, he said.

Four of the injured were rushed to hospital in Ankara, some 100 kilometres south-west of Cankiri, while six other people, whose identities were not immediately known, were treated in Cankiri for minor injuries.

"It was a very strong explosion. The windows and doors of nearby buildings were broken," Cankiri Prosecutor Ertem Turker said.

Television reports showed the wreckage of the blown up car with pieces strewn over the area. Security forces sealed off the blast site, while bomb experts from Ankara collected evidence.

"Security forces will most certainly catch and ask those responsible for the attack to account for what they have done," Bilican told journalists as he was leaving an Ankara hospital where the governor of Cankiri is being treated.

It was initially thought that the attack had been carried out by the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which has called for "intensification of the war" against the Turkish state after its leader Abdullah Ocalan was captured and hauled to Turkey last month to face trial.

TIKKO has been active in the southeastern Turkish province of Tunceli since the early 1970s. The Maoist organisation is believed to be supported mainly by Kurdish Alevites, a heterodox Shiite Muslim order.

Turkish security forces say that TIKKO lost ground during the military regime of 1980-83 and never managed to regain its former influence.

In July 1997, Cevik escaped unscathed from a bomb attack targeting him when he was the governor of the province of Tokat, 200 kilometres east of Cankiri. The governor made his mark in Tokat by launching operations against leftist groups.

A radical leftist organisation, the TKP-ML-TIKKO, had claimed responsibility for the previous attempt on his life, which injured two people. The TKP-ML-TIKKO split from the TIKKO in the early 1980s.

The latest bid to blow up the governor up was condemned by Turkey's senior officials who stressed that Turkey would not bow to "terrorist activities."

"We will not let the perpetrators of this crime escape," President Suleyman Demirel said.

Interior Minister Cahit Bayar condemned the "odious attack" at the beginning of a meeting of governors and security officers in Istanbul. The minister urged them to be vigilant and take the necessary measures to guard against such attacks.

Palestinians may announce 'state under occupation'

RAMALLAH (AFP) — The Palestinians will, if necessary, announce "a state under occupation" when the interim period of the peace agreement with Israel expires in May, a senior negotiator said on Friday.

"The announcement of a state is aimed at creating a new reality and that is that the occupied territories should become a state under occupation," Ahmad Qureia, the speaker of the Palestinian legislature, told AFP.

"The international community will then demand that the occupation of a recognised state should end," he said.

The Palestinians fear that the end of the interim period will leave them with only their current limited autonomy, and that their institutions, in place since 1994, will be in legal limbo.

Qureia said that the Palestinian leadership would take concrete steps to avoid this outcome and towards creating an independent state in May even if they give in to international appeals to delay announcing such an entity.

"On May 4, the Palestinian leadership will take decisions to embody sovereignty over the land," Qureia said.

"These decisions will be consistent with the demands of the administration of a state and will be organised in order to avoid a political, constitutional and legal vacuum in the Palestinian territories," he said, without elaborating on what steps would be taken.

Qureia's comments follow a speech by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to members of his Fatah faction Thursday in which he also pointedly did not say that a Palestinian state would be announced in May.

Arafat said only that the Palestinians were continuing to consult with countries involved

in the peace process on action to be taken in May, when the five-year interim period of self-rule set out in the 1993 Oslo peace accords expires.

"In the light of these consultations... Palestinian institutions will take a decision on this matter to guarantee Palestinian rights, the most important of which is the right to self-determination and the establishment of a state," Arafat was quoted as saying by the official WAFA news agency.

Qureia insisted that if the Palestinians do announce a state they will continue to negotiate on final-status issues which also include water rights, the status of Jerusalem and the return of refugees.

"We will ask the international community, particularly the Europeans, the Americans, Japan and Canada to recognise a state when it is announced," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ultra-Orthodox Jewish man stabbed

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — An ultra-Orthodox Jewish man was seriously wounded in a knife attack near Jerusalem's Old City on Friday, police said. Aharon Berkowitz, 49, from the ultra-Orthodox neighbourhood of Mea Shearim, told police he had been attacked near by a Palestinian who then fled. A spokesman for Jerusalem's Hadassah Hospital said the victim was undergoing surgery after losing a lot of blood and described his condition as "serious." Police had earlier reported that the man was lightly wounded with injuries to the stomach and hand.

Israel extends term of detainee

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel extended Friday by six months the jail term of Osama Barham, who has been held in administrative detention for five years, longer than any other Palestinian, military officials said. Barham's detention was prolonged after he refused an Israeli offer to go into exile abroad for three years as a condition of his release. He is accused of membership in Islamic Jihad, a Palestinian group opposed to the autonomy accord with Israel and responsible for attacks on Israelis. The Israeli human rights group B'tselem criticised the extension. "He must be brought before a court with evidence so he can be tried or, by default, immediately released," B'tselem said.

U.S. may hold up new aid to Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — The United States has told Israel it may hold up \$1.2 billion in new aid if the U.S.-brokered Wye River Israeli-Palestinian peace deal is not implemented, a senior Israeli official said on Friday. The official, who declined to be identified, suggested that Washington, unhappy with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's suspension of the Wye accord, could be trying to influence the outcome of Israel's general election on May 17. "U.S. Undersecretary of State Stuart Eizenstat said there may be a problem if the Wye River agreement is not implemented because the grant is conditioned on implementation of Wye," the senior official said. "The question is whether this is an obvious deliberate attempt to affect the election by threatening to withhold the money, implying that as a result of Netanyahu's policies it may cost Israel \$1.2 billion," the official said. The Ha'aretz newspaper reported on Friday that Eizenstat, who visited Israel this week, said that the United States would delay the aid to Israel but would go ahead with the transfer of a promised \$400 million to the Palestinians.

Warm welcome for Qadhafi in Egypt

MARSA MATRUH (AFP) — Hundreds of Egyptians cheered Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi as he arrived on a rare visit to discuss international efforts to put two Libyan suspects on trial for the Lockerbie bombing. Several hundred Egyptians stood at various points along the 220-kilometre road linking the Egyptian border post of Salum with the Mediterranean city of Marsa Matruh, many holding signs welcoming Qadhafi. The Libyan leader, whose last trip abroad was to Tunisia in October following a hip operation, travelled by road because of the 1992 U.N. air embargo on his country. Colonel Qadhafi met tribal dignitaries in a specially erected tent in Marsa Matruh before continuing on to Cairo by road where he will meet Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Saturday.

Israeli military debates withdrawal from south Lebanon

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Faced with mounting casualties, Israel's top military commanders have joined the public debate over the merits of a withdrawal from the so-called "security zone" in southern Lebanon.

"The time has come to stop musing words: we have no business staying in Lebanon," a high-ranking officer told Ha'aretz newspaper Friday following the deaths of a general and five other soldiers in Lebanon in less than a week.

"Hizbollah isn't a terrorist organisation. It's a guerrilla organisation. It's a national liberation organisation," said the officer, who was not identified.

"Show me a single case in history in which an army managed to occupy territory over time and defeat a guerrilla organisation that benefited from massive support and political backing from the local population," he said.

The senior army officer said Israel can withdraw from Lebanon just like the United States did from Vietnam, France did from Algeria, and Russia did from Afghanistan.

Similar opinions have been expressed by Israel's former northern region commander, General Amiram Levin, now the number two man in the Mossad secret service, and by the former head of military intelligence, reserve General Haim Efrati.

The current northern region commander, Major General Gabi Ashkenazi, admitted Friday in an interview with Maariv newspaper that the military was having problems tracking down and engaging Hizbollah fighters.

"The truth must be told, we are finding it difficult to locate Hizbollah in built up areas, not only at the point of contact but in the rear," Ashkenazi said.

But he opposed an unconditional withdrawal from southern Lebanon, where Israel's top commander inside the buffer zone, Brigadier General Erez Gerstein, was killed by a Hizbollah roadside bomb on Sunday.

"A pullout without an agreement or disarmament of the Hizbollah would be too dangerous," he said.

Amir Oren, a military expert who writes for Ha'aretz, said Israel's top brass are "as divided as the rest of [public] opinion on this issue."

"Some officers are ready to risk an unconditional withdrawal while others fear that without an agreement with Beirut and Damascus, northern Israel would be a target for attacks, which could lead to a serious military escalation," he said.

The Ha'aretz commentator added that "the military command feels that the army does the suffering" for decisions made by politicians.

Following the recent heavy losses in southern Lebanon, the issue of a withdrawal has taken a prominent role in the campaign for May elections for parliament and the post of prime minister.

Both opposition Labour Party leader Ehud Barak and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have held out the possibility of a withdrawal from the "Lebanese quagmire."

Barak said that if he is elected prime minister, he will pull Israeli forces out of the Jewish state's south Lebanon "security zone" by June 2000.

He also hinted that under his leadership, Israel would make sufficient concessions to Syria on the Golan Heights.

JORDAN TELEVISION

TEL. 4773111-19
PROGRAMME TWO

19:10News headlines
19:35Doc - Perspective
20:00 News in Arabic (Channel 2 links up with channel 1)
20:30 Programme on the late His Majesty King Hussein
21:00 Islamic History in Jordan
21:30On the Banks of Jordan
22:00News in English
22:10 Doc - National Geographic
23:00 News in Arabic (Channel 2 links up with channel 1)

PRAYER TIMES

04:37Fajr
05:54(Sunrise) Duha
11:47Dhuhr
15:06Asr
17:40Maghreb
18:57Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel.
4622366
Anglican Church Tel.
4624853/4624811
St. Aftem Syrian Orthodox
Church Tel. 4771751
Amman International Church
Tel. 5865897

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter
Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la
Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel.
4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweifeh
Tel. 5920146
The Uniate Catholic Church
Tel. 4634757
The English-Language
Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel.
4892679
The Baptist Church Tel.
4628052
The Armenian Catholic
Church Tel. 4771331
The Armenian Orthodox
Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department
of Meteorology

It will be warm during the day
becoming cool at night with
clouds appearing at different
altitudes and winds will be
northwesterly to southeasterly
moderate. In Aqaba, it will be

warm, winds northerly moderate,
and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman08/21
Aqaba14/27
Deserts06/23
Jordan Valley14/27

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 20 Aqaba 26. Humidity
readings: Amman 24 per cent,
Aqaba 18 per cent.

Following are the temperatures
expected today in the following
areas:

Ajloun03/12
Jerash06/18
Um Qays05/17
Madaba04/17
Petra05/17
Dead Sea03/18

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:
Dr. Abdul Rahim Mustafa 4744685
Dr. Issam Asmar 4890504
Dr. Yousef Nasser 4751144
Dr. Nidal As'ad 4751672

AMMAN:
Firas Pharmacy 5661912
Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730

Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004
Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169
IRBID:
Dr. Amin Shuqairi (02)7100069
Fou'ad Pharmacy (02)725360

ZARQA:
Dr. Hafez Salfiti (09)914144
Palestine Pharmacy (05)985562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue
4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 462111, 4637777
Fire Brigade 4617101
Blood Bank 4775121
Highway Police 5343402
Traffic Police 4896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints 5605800
Price Complaints 5661176
Water & Sewage Complaints 489467
Amman Municipality Complaints
787111
Telephone Information (directory
assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 0132
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs 4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101
Jordan Television 4773111
Radio Jordan 4774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615

Electric Power Co. 4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and
Special Surgery 5921199
The Islamic, Abdli 5666131/7
Hussein Medical Centre 5856856
Luzmila 4630195
Khalidi Maternity 4642816
Aklsh Maternity 464241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071
Shmeisani Hospital 5607431
Jordan Hospital 5607550
University Hospital 5353444
Al-Muasher Hospital 5662279
Al-Ahli, Abdali 56641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4777101/3
Al-Bashir 4775111/26
Army, Marka 4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 5157100
Amal Hospital (09)986731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital
(09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital
(02)275555
Roman Catholic Hospital
(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital
(02)7101572, (02)7103101
Rosary Sisters Hospital
(02)7102831, (02)7103011
Specialty Hospital (02)7103100

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT

This information is supplied by
Royal Jordanian (RJ) information
department at the Queen Alia
International Airport Tel.
(44)53200 where it should always
be verified. Information on other
flights is obtained on telephone
(44) 52700 or (44) 523250. Information
on Royal Wings flights
can be supplied on phone
4875201-5

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:45Damascus (RJ)

08:30Aqaba (add) (RJ)
09:30Tehran (RJ)
09:30New Delhi (RJ)
09:55Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:05Beirut (RJ)
10:50Colombo (RJ)
15:00New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:40London, Berlin (RJ)
18:35Manchester (add) (RJ)
20:20Cairo (RJ)
21:25Frankfurt (RJ)
21:55Rome, Milan (RJ)
00:35Jeddah (add) (RJ)
00:35Paris (add) (RJ)
02:45Lamaca (RJ)
07:10Bangkok, Doha (RJ)

Other Flights
13:15Riyadh (SV)
13:30Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
14:30Milan (AZ)
15:05Vienna (OS)
18:00Dubai, Damascus (EK)
18:40Beirut (ME)
19:05Paris (AF)
20:30Frankfurt (LH)
21:35Cairo (MS)
22:55London, Damascus (BA)
01:00Belgrade (JU)
01:15Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)

Royal Wings (RW)
08:30 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA)
(RW)
08:50 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA)
(RW)
18:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka
Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:00Aqaba (add) (RJ)
06:30Beirut (RJ)
07:00Manchester (add) (RJ)
11:15Rome (RJ)
11:30Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:30Frankfurt (RJ)
12:00Brussels (add) (RJ)
12:00Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:15London (RJ)
13:50Paris (RJ)
16:30Cairo (RJ)
19:35Jeddah (add) (RJ)
20:15Bombay (RJ)
23:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
23:15Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
23:30Lamaca (RJ)
23:59Jeddah (RJ)
02:00Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Royal Wings (RW)
06:00 Aqaba (from QAIA)
(RW)
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Air-
port) (RW)
19:45 Aqaba (from Marka Air-
port) (RW)



Minister of Public Works
Housing Hon. Ayman El-Fakhry

Government's new faces



Deputy Prime Minister
Marwan Hmoud

Born in Salt in 1942, a senator in the previous and current Parliaments; obtained a diploma in agriculture from the Hussein Agricultural College in 1963. He served as minister of the interior for agricultural and rural affairs in 1973, as minister of agriculture in 1973-1974, 1974-1976, and 1986-1987, and as minister of municipal and rural affairs and the environment in 1985-1986 and 1988-1989.

Hmoud, who has also been director general of the Agricultural Credit Corporation, was elected to the Lower House in the 10th (1984-1988) and 11th (1989-1993) Parliaments.

In his early political career, he was mayor of Salt in 1968-1970, a member of the National Unity Leadership Bureau (1972), and director of the Popular Organisation Bureau (1972).



Deputy Prime Minister
Ayman Majali

Born in Amman in 1949, received a BA in political science, and then worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as protocol director. He held various positions at the Royal Court Protocol, including that of chief assistant. Afterwards, Majali was appointed as director of His Majesty the late King Hussein's Office, and later worked as Chief of the Royal Court Protocol. He also worked in the Jordanian Embassy in Washington. Majali is married and has four children.



Minister of Education and Higher Education
Izzat Jaradat

Born in Bushra, Irbid, received a BA in English Language and Literature from the University of Damascus, followed by a diploma in education methodology from Exeter University, Britain. Jaradat obtained two masters degrees from the University of Columbia in New York: one in literature and another in education. He has a PhD in education. He has held several positions in the field of education, where he worked as a teacher and a supervisor of English at various scholastic levels and in community colleges. He was later appointed as director of special education, public education, educational planning and development, as well cultural and public relations at the ministry. In addition, he was assistant to the secretary general for administrative affairs' educational planning, research and development, and finally he became the ministry's secretary general. He participated in the assessment of educational renovation programmes in UNESCO's five international regions. Jaradat was also the head of UNESCO's Assessment Committee of the Arabic cultural, academic and scientific centres. He is currently a member of several educational institutions and committees worldwide.



Minister of Public Works and Housing
Hosni Abu Ghelda

Born in Haifa in 1944, graduated from the University of Aleppo with a BA in architectural engineering. Abu Ghelda first worked as a head of the Jordan Engineering Association for two consecutive terms, and later as head of the Arab Engineers Union, and the Arab Engineering Bureau Committee. He now holds the rank of opinion engineer at the ministry. Abu Ghelda is married and has five children.



Minister of Water and Irrigation
Kamel Mahadin

Born in 1954, has a BA in architectural engineering, an MA in site engineering and a PhD in site engineering and reserves administration. He worked as an associate professor and then as head of the Architectural Engineering Department at the University of Jordan. As an engineering consultant, he first worked at the Amman Greater Municipality, Muta and Al al Bayt universities as well as at the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. He was then designated as director general for the Petra Regional Authority.



Minister of Trade, Industry and Supply
Mohammad Asfour

Born in Amman in 1935, has a BA in economics and business administration in addition to an MA in economics. He was selected as president of Amman Chamber of Commerce, the Jordanian Union of the Chambers of Commerce, the Amman bureau of the International Chambers of Commerce, and the International Trade Centre. He is a member of the board of directors of Royal Jordanian, the Social Security Corporation, the Prime Ministry's Economic Consultation Council, Civil Aviation's board of directors. He assumed the chairmanship of several privately-run organisations.



Minister of Social and Administrative Development
Faisal Rifua

Born in 1956 in Tafila's Bseira, received his BA in politics from Baghdad University in 1979. Between 1982-1983, Rifua obtained a Masters degree in politics and another in philosophy and international politics from India. From 1982-1986, he worked for the Arab League and the Arab Cultural Centre in New Delhi. He held several positions at the University of Jordan, including the head of the Political Science Faculty, his most recent posting.



Minister of Justice
Hamzeh Haddad

Born in Huruwara, Irbid, in 1950. He received his B.A. in law from Damascus University. He completed his masters and PhD degrees in law at Cairo University. He also received another PhD in law from Bristol University in Britain. Haddad worked as a professor at the University of Jordan (1976-1984), and was then appointed as dean of the university's Faculty of Law in 1984. He worked as a lawyer and produced more than 30 scholarly works in both English and Arabic in the field of law.



Minister of Health
Ishaq Maraqa

Born in Hebron 1934, studied medicine at Cairo University. He was appointed as head of the Al Hussein Medical Centre (1975-1978) and worked in the private sector as a neurosurgeon. He was a member of the National Consultative Council. He was elected president of Jordanian Medical Association for the 1990-1994 term. He holds Al Istiklal Medal of the First Order and Al Istiklal Medal of the Third Order and the Karama Banle Medal among other honours.

Rawabdeh accepts premiership

'We will strike with an iron fist against those who try to tamper with citizens' interests'

Following are major excerpts from newly-appointed Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh's reply of March 4 to His Majesty King Abdullah's letter of designation to form a new government:

I AM honoured to address Your Majesty in pledging allegiance to the Throne and in imploring God Almighty to bless you and guide you in leading the nation, succeeding the late King Hussein who enjoys the respect of all nations and whose memory forever will remain engraved in our memory.

I received with deep appreciation and gratitude your letter of designation, entrusting me with the formation of the first government under your reign. Your letter expressed your great love of this nation, its good people and your sincere desire to ensure security and stability for the Kingdom. In accepting the mission as a true soldier, I pledge before you and God to work together with my colleagues [and use our] full potential to implement your directives and meet your ambition to consolidate and strengthen the nation, with its citizens taking pride in their country and nation.

I pledge to work in a climate of freedom, democracy, pluralism, within the rule of law, to safeguard human rights and national unity, working in close cooperation and continued understanding with the legislative and judicial authorities, in which we take pride. We pledge to protect the independence of the judiciary by providing it with all tools to ensure its performance in protecting people's rights and freedoms under the rule of law.

Our valiant Armed Forces are the source of our national pride, serving as the nation's shield. My government will give the Armed Forces all the care they require in all circumstances so that they will remain the symbol of loyalty and the title of distinguished performance. We will spare no effort to meet the Armed Forces' requirements and needs. We

Activists optimistic about women's rights

(Continued from page 1)

"They should cancel the whole article, not just one clause dealing with exemptions," she said.

The government change on Thursday witnessed the unprecedented appointment of a woman as deputy to the prime minister.

Khadar welcomed the appointment of Khalaf, a senator and a former minister of trade and industry and of planning, who she said has shown outstanding abilities in handling these sensitive portfolios.

"I am glad that she was reappointed in a higher position. This is a positive indicator... proof that women are capable of occupying decision-making seats," she added.

Only a handful of women have held ministerial posts over the past 15 years, and they remain a rarity in the upper echelons of the country's judiciary.

Toujan Faisal, the only woman to secure a seat in the Lower House of Parliament in the 1993 parliamentary elections, lost her second bid for the House in the 1997 ballot.

Women activists also welcomed King Abdullah's attempt to focus on improving the lot of women living in rural areas and the badia.

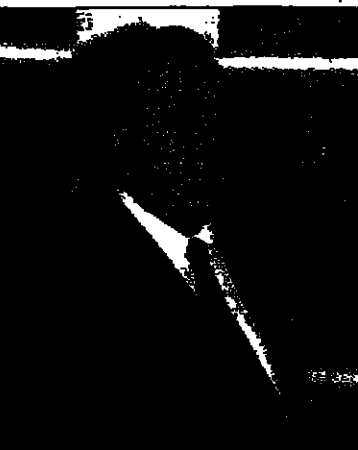
"I believe that the King specifically mentioned the badia because women there lack services and are marginalised communities who should join the mainstream," Sabbagh explained.

Khadar also called on the new government to adopt the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and publish it formally.

The government has signed the treaty but it will take effect only when it is published in the official gazette.

"When it takes effect, we will have a better opportunity to either call for the amendment of legislation that discriminates against women, or to take to court any case that is discriminatory," she said.

Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh



Born in Sarif, Irbid, in 1939, was deputy prime minister and education minister in the 1995-1996 government of HRH Prince Zeid Ben Shaker. He served as Minister of Transport in 1976-1977, Minister of Health in 1977-1979, Minister of Public Works and Housing in 1989-1991, and as Minister of Education and Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs in

1994-1995. He served as deputy in the 11th (1989-1993), 12th (1993-1997), and 13th Parliaments.

At the beginning of his professional and political career, Rawabdeh, who graduated with honours in pharmacy from the American University of Beirut in 1962, has served as a pharmacy inspector, a lecturer at the Nursing College, director of the Pharmaceutical Department at the University of Jordan, director of the Planning and Foreign Affairs Department at the Ministry of Health, and director of the Management and Service Department at Yarmouk University.

A member of the National Consultative Council in 1978-1983, Rawabdeh was mayor of Amman in 1983-1986.

He also chaired the board of directors of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company in 1982-1985, and the commission of directors of the Zeitounah Co. in 1982-1992.

Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh

1994-1995. He served as deputy in the 11th (1989-1993), 12th (1993-1997), and 13th Parliaments.

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A member of the National Consultative Council in 1978-1983, Rawabdeh was mayor of Amman in 1983-1986.

He also chaired the board of directors of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company in 1982-1985, and the commission of directors of the Zeitounah Co. in 1982-1992.

will also give due care to the security services, which safeguard the nation's security, stability and reassurance, so as to enable them to pursue their role in the best and most exemplary manner.

Your Majesty's directives will be a beacon lighting our way in all endeavours and activities. We will work towards moderation and constructive dialogue with all sectors. [We pledge] to honour our national commitments, placing national interests above all other considerations. We will act with vigilance and responsible freedom to ensure control of various aspects of government's activities.

At the forefront of my government's objectives is comprehensive socio-economic development that will benefit all the homeland in a balanced manner and will ensure the just distribution of benefits throughout the Kingdom, particularly in the badia, the rural areas and the [Palestinian refugee] camps. We will reach out to Jordanian citizens to try to identify their needs, their demand and services. We plan to develop the national economic restructuring programme in a manner that caters to [our] new circumstances and changes with the purpose of speeding up economic growth rates, boosting production and creating new job opportunities. We pledge to develop national resources, protect

the environment, ensure food and water security, and facilitate the investment procedures, working hand-in-hand with private sector institutions and involving this sector in all economic decisions. We will give special attention to unemployment and poverty to meet people with special needs, including women and youth and to important sectors such as sports, cultural education, health, water and energy.

My government will do all that is in power to develop the public administration by restructuring its base on scientific grounds. We will modernise administrative procedures and will firmly deal with all forms of dereliction and corruption, no matter the source.

We will strike with an iron fist against all those who try to tamper with citizens' interests, the national wealth and public funds. Accountability will be the main theme in dealings within the administrative system, with the purpose of highlighting the country's achievements. The incompetent will be punished and the creative will be rewarded. We will give due concern and attention, within our means, to civil and military employees and pensioners.

My government will exert efforts to consolidate Arab solidarity and overcome the causes of difference. We will work closely with our brothers in the Palestinian National Authority and support the Palestinian people to regain their rights. We will emphasise the fact that we have a common destiny and common interests and we will support the peace process within the concept of our principled stand laid down by the late King in accordance with your directives. We will continue to cooperate closely with friendly nations, and regional and international organisations to safeguard Jordan's interests.

Your Majesty's directives will serve as the government's policy which will be translated into facts on the ground.

King thanks Tarawneh for sincere efforts

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Thursday accepted the resignation of former Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, praising the former Cabinet's "sincere efforts to deal with several national issues."

"As you have [chosen], my brother, to submit your government's resignation and give the opportunity to another of this nation's select men to take the responsibility and continue the march, I accept your resignation. I stress my deep

appreciation for your efforts and those of your colleagues, and I am confident that your contribution will continue," King Abdullah said in a letter of reply to Tarawneh's resignation.

"You and your colleagues have tirelessly and enthusiastically taken on the responsibility of dealing with several national causes in accordance with the capabilities available to you and your team, all of whom belong to the Kingdom, loyal to its leadership and

convinced of its message." The King said His Majesty followed Tarawneh's efforts and decisions to "serve the nation and citizens."

"You have earned the trust and appreciation [of King Hussein] who was proud of your efforts in support of our national march in difficult times during the absence of the late leader," said the King.

In his letter, Tarawneh said Jordan's current stage

required the [government's] resignation, stressing that he and his colleagues will remain in gratitude for the "unlimited" trust and support of King Hussein and King Abdullah.

"I was honoured by King Hussein's designation [of me] to take responsibility during critical moments, when my colleagues and I assumed our Constitutional duties in loyalty to the Hashemite Throne and to Jordan and its people," he said.

King names Rawabdeh to head new government

(Continued from page 1)

Another source said "Jordan will continue to work tirelessly towards achieving a comprehensive peace," but added that "relations with Israel will be more balanced."

"This government will give in as much as the Israelis will give in," he said.

Observers have noted that the newly appointed Cabinet does not include any peace negotiators, as opposed to all previous governments since the signing of the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

In his long political career, Rawabdeh has always defended peace as part of Jordan's national interest. In a now famous debate which was aired more than a year ago on satellite TV with popular opposition leader Leith Shbeilat to discuss peace, Rawabdeh displayed his skills as a convincing orator. But sources close to him say that he has in the past limited his contacts with Israelis.

Rawabdeh is Jordan's 32nd prime minister, while his government is the country's 84th Cabinet since 1921.

The new government retains eight ministers from the previous Tarawneh Cabinet, including the key portfolios of Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib, Interior Minister Nayef Qadi, Finance Minister Michel Marto, and Tourism Minister Akel Biltaji, who has served in

the same post in three previous governments.

The newly-appointed premier is flanked by three deputy prime ministers: Senator Marwan Hmoud, whose background in agriculture might help in the anticipated drought expected to cost the economy \$150 million in losses; Senator Rima Khalaf, who also assumed for the third time the crucial planning portfolio; and Ayman Majali, who left his post as chief of Royal Protocol to Faisal Fayez.

Another change at the Royal Court was expected to be the appointment of Samir Rifai, former director of the private office of HRH Prince Hassan, to the key post of Royal Court secretary general.

Former Planning Minister Nabil Amnari was expected to be appointed as economic advisor to the King.

Among the 14 newcomers to the Cabinet, 11 are serving as ministers for the first time and are mostly technocrats such as Education Minister Izzat Jaradat, who was secretary general at the education ministry, Trade and Industry Minister Mohammad Asfour, who headed the Chamber of Commerce, and Energy Minister Suleiman Abu Alim, who headed the National Resources Authority.

But a real surprise to many analysts was the inclusion of two self-styled Islamists from the highest ranks of the professional associations, both of whom

have led fierce campaigns against the peace treaty and normalisation of ties with Israel, and have been at the forefront in accusing previous governments of undemocratic and unconstitutional practices.

Minister of Public Works Hosni Abu Ghelda presided over the powerful Jordan Engineers Association until his appointment, while Health Minister Ishaq Maraqa is a former president of the Jordan Medical Association.

"The fact that the government includes two Islamists means that the next period will witness attempts to mend fences with the opposition and the professional unions," said one analyst.

However, an Islamic Action Front (IAF) source said Rawabdeh's move was insufficient to open a new era in relations between the regime and the Islamist-led opposition, at loggerheads since 1997.

"This Cabinet was concocted behind closed doors, following tribal and even geographical criteria, and not on a political platform," the IAF official told the Jordan Times yesterday.

Rawabdeh, a veteran politician who led the centrist Reawakening Party until it merged with another eight groups in the National Constitutional Party — from which Rawabdeh resigned a few months ago — is well respected for his broad knowledge and his witty, at times even caustic, tongue.

One official who has worked with him in previous governments said "Rawabdeh is smart and incredibly well-read. One can open any subject with him."

Rawabdeh's blunt remarks have at times sparked controversies, especially in the capital's elite circles, the official said, conceding that the new premier has been described as "a confrontational type" by many.

"But he is the man for the job, somebody who can move things forward."

In addition to the timing of Thursday's government change, the choice of Rawabdeh was also unexpected. Columnists in the local press on Friday expressed "astonishment" at the appointment, which came after other names, including those of former prime ministers, ministers, and top security officials, had been floating around political circles.

Deputy Mahmoud Kharabsheh (Balqa), rapporteur of the House Legal Affairs Committee, said Rawabdeh might use the King's letter of designation as a policy statement in order to reduce to two to three days the parliamentary debate on the vote of confidence to the new government.

"Debate on the government's platform is expected to start in the third week of March," Kharabsheh told the Jordan Times, adding that Rawabdeh is slated to clinch an "overwhelming majority."

Italians wonder who will pay for tragedy

ROME (AP) — Bewildered and outraged by the acquittal of a U.S. Marine pilot, Italians Friday demanded justice for 20 people who were sent plunging to their deaths when his jet ripped through a gondola cable in the Alps.

Capt. Richard Ashby, 31, was acquitted Thursday at Camp Lejeune, N.C., of 20 counts of involuntary manslaughter for the Feb. 3, 1998, tragedy, in the Cavalese ski resort in northern Italy. He still faces an obstruction of justice charge.

"If the pilot wasn't guilty, then someone above him was," said the Rev. Lorenzo Caserotti, the Roman Catholic pastor in the Alpine town. "This verdict leaves us all astounded."

Prosecutors had alleged that Ashby was flying the EA-6B Prowler too fast and too low during a training mission through the Alpine valley. The defence blamed faulty equipment and bad maps.

Italian newspapers reported that Premier Massimo D'Alema would bring up the matter when he meets President Clinton today at the White House.

"We are asking for justice, and we shall explore all the

legal ways to ensure that those who are responsible are held liable," D'Alema told reporters in Boston Thursday.

The accident strained relations between the United States and Italy, which hosts a number of military bases important to the NATO alliance. The verdict renewed calls by some to close down the bases.

"The victims didn't get the justice they deserved," said Fausto Bertinotti, head of the Communist Refoundation Party.

"This is not only the acquittal of a pilot, this is the acquittal of an entire system."

The undersecretary of defence, Paolo Guerini, said parliament should review the provisions of the NATO treaty that gave the United States jurisdiction in the case.

Washington's ambassador in Rome, Thomas M. Foglietta, in a statement distributed Friday, said he was "shocked" at the verdict. Foglietta noted that after the accident happened, he went to the site.

After "speaking to our military experts in the Department of Defence, I concluded and said that the



U.S. Marine Captain Richard Ashby (right) speaks to the press at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina after a military jury acquitted him of all charges that he recklessly flew his jet into an Italian ski lift cable, killing 20 people. With Ashby is his attorney Frank Spinner (left) and U.S. Captain Jon Shelbourne (Reuters photo)

pilots flying that plane were flying too fast and too low, and that it was our fault....

Like many, I am surprised at the verdict," the ambassador said, adding he hoped both nations "will continue to work together for a safe and peaceful world."

"It's a shameful verdict," said Klaus Stampf, the son of one of the victims, Maria Steiner, a 60-year-old retired shopkeeper from northern Italy.

"It was certainly not a serious trial, not as serious

as it would have been in Italy," said Stampf, who attended a few court sessions.

Steiner was one of three Italians who died, along with two Poles, seven Germans, five Belgians, two Austrians and one Dutch person.

Said the brother of Belgian victim Stefan Vermander, Filip Vermander: "We have proven facts like flying too fast, too low in an open valley. And then we have a not-

guilty verdict? It is not to be understood."

Belgian justice minister, Tony van Parys, said: "Based on legal perceptions, I have the impression that some things are not in synch."

Attorneys for the victims are seeking damages from the U.S. government.

Thursday's acquittal "leaves a bitter taste in the mouth," wrote Il Messaggero columnist Roberto Martinelli in a front-page piece Friday.

"The impunity of the powerful," was the title of La Repubblica's lead column.

The only positive reaction came from the Italian lawyers who defended Ashby in the Italian investigation. Antonio and Bruno Malattia, who called the trial "scrupulous" and the verdict correct.

Ashby's navigator, Capt. Joseph Schweitzer, is awaiting trial on similar charges. Charges against the back-seat crew were dropped.

Investigators visit alleged Tamil mass grave site

JAFFNA, Sri Lanka (AP) — From a desolate, muddy field deep in the Tamil heartland, government forensic experts Friday collected soil samples as a first step in investigating claims some 300 civilians who were allegedly killed by the Sri Lankan military are buried there in a mass grave.

Tight security kept most people away. But Sarojini Nagamma, whose 23-year-old son has been missing for 16 months, came as close as she could to watch the start of the investigation.

"I fear he is there," she said, pointing at the site. The federal forensic experts visited the Chemmani area, 24 kilometres south of Jaffna, to ascertain the validity of a soldier's claim he helped bury bodies at the site. The soldier made his claim in July after being convicted of the rape and murder of a family of Tamils.

Tamil tiger rebels had seized Jaffna in 1990 and proclaimed a government for the more than one million people who live in northern Sri Lanka, where Tamils predominate. Sri Lanka's army retook the city in 1995 after a 50-day offensive and has been administering the area since. Rebels continue to strike, though, from surrounding jungles.

The Tigers have been fighting since 1983 to establish a separate homeland for Sri Lanka's 3.3 million Tamils, accusing the 14 million Sinhalese majority of discrimination, a charge the government denies. Over 57,000 people have died in 16-year insurrection.

In its latest human rights report, the U.S. State Department accused both the Sri Lankan military and the tigers of killing non-combatants during the civil war.

The government first ordered an inquiry into the mass grave allegation in July, after the soldier's statement. But work was delayed, the government

says, because of floods and difficulties finding specialist investigators.

The latest obstacle came when the rebels ordered the closure of courts in Jaffna, saying they wanted international human rights groups, not local courts, to investigate the alleged killings. Jaffna courts closed Monday because of the threats, with notices saying they would not reopen for three months.

Under pressure from international human rights groups — Amnesty International has accused the government of stalling the investigation — the Sri Lankan government pressed ahead.

Friday, Sri Lankan soldiers in full battle gear welcomed the federal team, which was accompanied by another government plane carrying journalists. Jaffna is 300 kilometres north of Colombo.

A convoy of 12 cars escorted by Sri Lankan soldiers on machine gun mounted jeeps then travelled from the airport to Jaffna's court house, where Judge N. Arulsaharam was persuaded with some difficulty to accompany the investigators to the alleged grave site despite the court closure.

Reporters had mistakenly thought S.A.E. Ekanathan, the Jaffna magistrate overseeing the case, met the federal team at the airport. Ekanathan's absence and Arulsaharam's role were not immediately explained.

Judge Arulsaharam later told the federal team that he would rule March 26 on when to start actual digging.

The convoy stopped at the entrance of Chemmani, a thriving suburb before the rebels were driven out of the area. Soldiers left their jeeps and took up position and then forensic experts Chandrasiri Nitiellage M.A.J. Mendis collected 17 soil samples in plastic bags and bottles. The samples were to be flown to Colombo for analysis.

U.S. North Korea pointman meets with Chinese president

BEIJING (AFP) — U.S. pointman for North Korea William Perry met Friday with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, the official Xinhua news agency said.

No details were given about the meeting but the U.S. embassy said Thursday the North Korea policy coordinator was expected to meet with top Chinese officials to review Washington's approach to Pyongyang.

"It is an ongoing consultation process. He was here in December and in January as well. He is due to release a report on North Korea in the spring," a U.S. embassy official said.

Perry arrived here Thursday from eastern Hangzhou city, where he and other former U.S. army officers participated in a

China-U.S. security seminar, Xinhua said.

Chinese delegates to the seminar included Wang Daohan, China's top envoy to Taiwan, the official China daily reported.

"The delegates stressed that the Taiwan issue is the centre of Sino-U.S. relations," the paper said.

"Both the arms sales to Taiwan and the inclusion of Taiwan into the theatre missile defence system will severely harm the stability of the region, and finally threaten bilateral relations."

China has vehemently opposed the proposed introduction by the U.S. of high-altitude Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) systems in the region, saying it would affect security and delay the reunification

of Taiwan with the mainland.

Spurred by North Korean missile developments, Washington and Tokyo have begun cooperating on developing defences against ballistic missile attacks.

Conservatives in the U.S. Congress are urging the administration to extend such a shield to China's arch rival Taiwan.

Beijing has repeatedly called for Taiwan to unite with China under "one country, two systems" — the formula under which Hong Kong's free-wheeling capitalist system was guaranteed autonomy for 50 years after the end of British rule in 1997.

Reports from Taipei had said Perry's attendance at the seminar was part of a

bid to press for restarting stalled talks between Taiwan and China, but the U.S. embassy denied any knowledge of the conference.

"His focus is on North Korea. We don't know if it involves Taiwan issues at all. He is the special adviser to the president on U.S. North Korea policy. That has no connection to Taiwan," the U.S. embassy official said.

Perry's Asian trip, which ends on March 10, will also include visits to Seoul and Tokyo.

Perry, a former secretary of defence, is charged with conducting a top-to-bottom review of President Bill Clinton's North Korea policy. He is expected to make his findings and recommendations within weeks.

Malaysian PM rules out alliance with opposition after state polls

KOTA KINABALU, Malaysia (AFP) — Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad Friday ruled out an alliance with the opposition if his ruling National Front coalition wins March 12-13 elections.

Mahathir dismissed pledges from the president of the opposition Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS), Joseph Pairin Kitingan, who has stressed the PBS would seek to have good relations with the central government if his party loses next week's poll.

"Why should we work closely with an opposition government when we have capable and sincere leaders in the Sabah National Front who already have a good working relationship with the federal government?" Mahathir said at a National Front gathering in Tuaran, a small town some 40 kilometres east of Kota Kinabalu.

"The PBS only wants what is good for them and the moment they do get what they want or they feel they can get something better elsewhere, they leave you," he said, apparently referring to the

PBS pullout from the coalition prior to the 1990 elections.

Later at another rally in Papar, 50 kilometres southwest of Kota Kinabalu, Mahathir said he welcomed a proposed challenge from the wife of his former deputy Anwar Ibrahim for his parliamentary seat in the next general polls.

"I welcome Wan Azizah's challenge but what could she do (if she wins). She can't do anything," said Mahathir, adding "she can make promises but I do not think she can fulfill them."

Anwar's wife, Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, last week said she would consider running against Mahathir in his home constituency Kudat state in Malaysia's next general elections.

Mahathir has also said the opposition Parti Barisan Rakyat Sabah (Bersekutu), led by his former ally Harris Salleh, has nothing to offer and had just surfaced to fight the elections.

On the peninsular-based Parti Islam Se-Malaysia

(PAS) which is fielding eight contestants in the election, the 73-year-old leader said: "Even if they win, they cannot form the government. But the real reason for them contesting is because they want to try and shame United Malays National Organisation (UMNO)."

"They're angry with us (in the peninsula) but the Sabah people will reject them. They only want to split the Muslim votes and help the opposition, like PBS."

Mahathir is the president of the UMNO which is the dominant ruling party in the National Front coalition. Mahathir also made a thinly veiled jibe at Anwar, whom he sacked in September, although he did not refer to him by name.

"Malaysia once had a finance minister who raised interest rates despite being told the opposite. Businessmen could not take loans and they could not service their debts. The Malaysian economy almost collapsed," he said.

But Mahathir's hard-hitting style of campaigning

is not going down well with all Sabahans. Many say the presence of Mahathir and almost all of his cabinet members in Sabah could backfire.

"Sabahans welcome development as it is our right," said a young civil servant. "After all that is why we are part of Malaysia. But after 36 years of independence, we are still lagging behind the other states in peninsular Malaysia."

"We only see (federal) ministers hurrying in and out of the state come election time. After that, they simply vanish," he added.

The presence of Mahathir on his second visit in less than three weeks, is also not going down well with national front members.

"They have come and made their pledges and promises. It is best they go back and leave the campaigning to us," a Kadazandusun-based Parti Demokratik Sabah leader said.

The elections for 48 seats in the state assembly are seen as a major test for the coalition before national polls.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Elizabeth Dole edges towards 2000 presidential run

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Elizabeth Dole, former U.S. transportation secretary and wife of 1996 presidential contender Robert Dole, will take next week her first step towards declaring her candidacy for the 2000 presidential race, the Washington Post said Friday. Dole, 62, will announce Wednesday the formation of an exploratory committee to test the waters for a run at the White House on the Republican ticket. An exploratory committee would look into financing and staffing of a presidential campaign and is an almost sure sign of serious intentions of running for office. Dole will join Texas Governor George Bush, son of the former president, and conservative commentator Pat Buchanan, who have already announced their intention to bid for the Republican nomination. On the Democratic side, Vice President Al Gore has already announced his intention to bid for the American Red Cross, is tied with Bush in a USA Today/CNN/Gallup poll, with 88 per cent of the favourable rating among Republicans. However, she outranks Bush by 75 to 69 per cent in favourability among all voters. Other Republican White House hopefuls include former Vice President Dan Quayle; representative John Kasich; Arizona Senator John McCain; former Tennessee governor Lamar Alexander; conservative activist Gary Bauer and New Hampshire Senator Robert Smith.

Journalist group deplores detention of Hong Kong reporters in China

HONG KONG (AFP) — The U.S.-based Committee to Protect Journalists Friday expressed concern over reports China had briefly detained a group of 20 Hong Kong reporters attempting to cover a murder trial in southern China. "We are disturbed by the authorities' interference with the work of these journalists, because it points to the persistent refusal of Chinese authorities to accept journalists' rights to gather and disseminate information freely and without fear of reprisal," it said in a letter sent to President Jiang Zemin. The group of 20 Hong Kong reporters and photographers were in Shantou, southern China to cover the murder trial of Chinese "feng shui" master, Li Yuhui, accused of murdering five women in Hong Kong. They were arrested when trying to approach a hairdressing salon run by the defendant's wife and held for an hour for questioning. "We strongly urge your excellency to reprimand the police for detaining the reporters and to instruct local authorities in Shantou to allow the press covering the Li trial to work without restrictions for harassment," it said. One of the detained reporters quoted Shantou police as saying they had been arrested because the locals were not used to the presence of so many strangers. The police said the reporters could have caused "panic" in the community. The journalists all had official accreditation to cover the trial and were later allowed to resume coverage of the case, the statement said. The Committee to Protect Journalists is a non-profit making organisation dedicated to the defence of journalists worldwide.

Europe's first P4 virus research centre inaugurated

LYON, France (AFP) — Europe's first P4 microbiology laboratory, aimed at studying the world's deadliest viruses, was being inaugurated Friday in this southeastern French city by President Jacques Chirac. The world's fourth such centre will be headed by Briton Susan Fischer-Hoch who said it will be "the world's safest laboratory" when it starts work in April. Other P4 laboratories — "P" for "protection" and "4" for the maximum level of confinement required for research into viruses — exist in south Africa and in the United States. Atlanta's Centre for Disease Control and an army unit in Fort Detrick in Maryland. A fifth P4 is being built in Canada. An immense glass strong house perched on stilts, the laboratory will house virus colonies in liquid nitrogen in locked vats, with video cameras installed for surveillance of the rodents and monkeys and scientists required to work in protective garb. In case of cracks or accidents to the building, air will be able to enter but not to leave this structure. Research will focus on the control and study of lethal viruses such as the acute virus diseases Ebola, that causes fever and haemorrhaging, or Lassa fever, characterised by high fever and inflammation of body parts. The laboratory was built by France's Merieux Pharmaceutical firm and brings together various European scientific centres.

Mozambican Muslim leader arrested over purchase of a human head

MAPUTO (AFP) — A senior Muslim leader in Mozambique's capital Maputo has been arrested for alleged involvement in trading in human body parts, police said Friday. A police spokesman said Maulana (priest) Mahomed Chafique was arrested this week as he was due to receive a human head he allegedly ordered from two young men. The men were caught with the head, which had the ears, nose and eyes removed, said the police. The two told the police that Chafique had asked them for a human head at a price of about \$9,000 and that they had murdered a friend to get one. Human body parts are used in many parts of Africa for witchcraft. In Maputo's Muslim community, there are complaints that Chafique is a victim of political manipulation designed to discredit Muslims in the eyes of the Mozambican government. Some four million Muslims and five million Christians form part of Mozambique's population of more than 17 million, with most of the others following traditional beliefs.

More than 700 people still missing in Colombian quake

BOGOTA (AFP) — Despite search efforts, there are still 731 people missing from the Jan. 25 earthquake that struck Colombia's coffee-growing region, authorities said Thursday. The 6.0-magnitude earthquake on the Richter scale killed 1,185 people, left 158,981 homeless, destroyed 35,972 homes and damaged another 43,476, said Luis Villegas, who heads the reconstruction effort. He said 473 women and 258 men were still unaccounted for, and that 86,952 people were left without work as a result of the devastation, raising the unemployment rate in the area to 34 per cent.

Bus crash kills 12, injures 22

SHANGHAI (R) — A bus collided head-on with a truck on the outskirts of Shanghai Friday, killing 12 people and injuring 22, local television said. Seven of those hurt were in serious condition, television said. While trying to overtake another vehicle, the truck slammed into an oncoming passenger bus on a highway in the Jinshan district. Vice Mayor Chen Liangyu rushed to a local hospital to visit those injured in the accident, television said without giving further details.

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U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (left) wears around her neck an East Timorese scarf she received as a present from East Timorese rebel leader Xanana Gusmao before their meeting at Jakarta's foreign ministry office (Reuters photo)

U.S. favours U.N. presence in East Timor

JAKARTA (R) — The United States said Friday it would like an international presence in troubled East Timor, possibly involving the United Nations.

A senior State Department official travelling with U.S. State Secretary Madeleine Albright also told reporters that Washington believed elements of Indonesia's military were arming pro-integration East Timorese.

"(The presence) could be regional, it could be a U.N. presence or a mixture," the official said following talks between Albright and Indonesian President B.J. Habibie.

Albright said in a speech ongoing violence in the restive province must be halted before a political solution can be found.

"The goal must not be simply to slice East Timor apart or cast it adrift; but rather to ensure its cohe-

sion and viability — whether through autonomy or independence," she said.

"That means that vigorous steps must be taken to break the cycle of violence on the ground, even as the negotiations continue. A further escalation of hostilities could render any diplomatic outcome moot." She called for the disarming of pro and anti-Jakarta groups.

"We favour confidence-building measures, such as a reduction in the number of troops and an international presence to reduce the prospects for future violence," she said.

In late January, Indonesia abruptly reversed its policy of 23 years and told its youngest and most rebellious province that it could go it alone if autonomy under Jakarta rule was not enough.

Many analysts warn East Timor, under often brutal

military rule since it was invaded by Indonesia in 1975, is ill-prepared for sudden independence and could descend into civil war.

Albright also raised concerns over arms supplies to East Timorese who want to stay within Jakarta's embrace.

"We think that arms are getting to the integrationists from elements of the ABRI (the military)... We have no reason to believe it is a policy of the ABRI," the official said.

"They (Indonesia) have made clear that this is not their policy but nevertheless we say this is exactly what will spawn chaos and instability. That has to stop... they have not done enough to find out what's going on," he added.

Albright was clearly surprised that in her meeting with jailed East Timor leader Xanana Gusmao,

who was taken from house arrest to meet her at the foreign ministry, he made little of the issue.

Gusmao told Albright he wanted a political not a military solution with an election for district representatives to a consultative assembly which would then meet on whether to go for autonomy under Jakarta or independence, possibly by June 7.

June 7 is the date of Indonesia's first democratic general election since the mid-1950s.

"He argued very strenuously that the U.N. or some other international presence would not need to be a military presence. He thought disarmament could occur peacefully and these people would monitor and supervise the disarmament and then help train the new security force," the official said.

Yeltsin moves to secure Berezovsky ouster

MOSCOW (AFP) — President Boris Yeltsin moved Friday to oust arch-tycoon Boris Berezovsky from the helm of a post-Soviet regional grouping, in the latest twist in a spiralling power struggle in Moscow.

Yeltsin followed up his decision late Thursday to sack his one-time confidante Berezovsky as executive secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States by telephoning his CIS counterparts and urging them to approve the ouster, the Kremlin said.

Yeltsin's decision needs the support of the 11 other presidents in the loose alliance to take effect, but both the Kremlin and Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov made it clear Friday that Berezovsky was no longer an acceptable CIS figurehead given his recent sharp criticism of the Russian government.

Berezovsky, a long-time Kremlin intriguer who bankrolled Yeltsin's reelection campaign in 1996, has made no secret of his distaste for Primakov's cabinet, accusing the government earlier this week of trying to turn the clocks back and failing to deal with Russia's economic crisis.

The outspoken remarks were too much for the Kremlin and government. In ordering Berezovsky's dismissal, Yeltsin noted that "no international official has the right to interfere in the internal affairs of any CIS member-nation," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Yakushkin told Interfax.

Primakov, meanwhile, told Russian television that "the executive secretary should not intervene in the internal or political affairs of any state within the CIS, less still criticise a government." Berezovsky, 53, blamed his ouster however on

Communists in Moscow who he said wanted to restore former control over Russia's former sphere of influence and replace the moribund CIS with a tighter union reminiscent of the former Soviet empire.

"They are trying to rebuild an empire," Berezovsky told reporters at Baku airport after talks with Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev.

"But the Communists will not return to power in the same form as they were before. They will return as fascists."

"The Communists are a great evil for all of Russia, and for every member state of our Commonwealth," he said.

Several leaders of former Soviet republics publicly questioned Yeltsin's tactics, with Aliyev calling the decision to sack Berezovsky "incomprehensible." "The (CIS) heads of state took a joint decision on the

election of the executive secretary, and if questions are raised on his dismissal, it must be decided jointly," Aliyev told reporters here.

Kazakhstan said that Yeltsin's move could actually have little support among former Soviet republics. Kazakh Prime Minister Nurlan Balgimbayev said that the dismissal is "maybe the opinion only of Boris Yeltsin," Interfax reported.

But CIS officials in Moscow said they were confident that presidents would sign a dismissal order circulated Friday, the agency added.

Berezovsky was appointed to the executive job of the dormant CIS last April in what was then seen as another comeback by the inscrutable Kremlin insider.

But he has since fallen out with two successive Russian governments, drawing on his massive influence to lobby actively for the dis-

missal of former Premier Sergei Kiriyenko before wrapping his media tentacles around successor Primakov.

Moscow's political class was almost unanimous in welcoming the moves to sideline Berezovsky, who has been left with fewer and fewer allies in the corridors of power since the dismissal of Viktor Chernomyrdin as prime minister a year ago.

First Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Maslyukov believes the move "will benefit the Commonwealth," his spokesman was quoted by Interfax as saying.

The leader of the Our Home is Russia political faction, centrist Vladimir Ryzhkov, said: "The president should have made the decision to remove Berezovsky from his post long ago."

Leader says Kosovo Albanians might sign peace deal early

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AP) — Kosovo Albanians might sign an interim peace accord ahead of schedule, one of their top leaders said Friday. Such a move would increase pressure on the Serbs to drop resistance to the peace plan.

The United States has launched a new diplomatic push to nail down ethnic Albanians' signatures on the deal. At the head of that drive, former U.S. Senator and Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole arrived in Macedonia Friday to talk to ethnic Albanian leaders.

Dole travelled to the Balkans after a request by President Clinton. Unless a last-minute attempt to get a Yugoslav visa to enter Kosovo succeeds, Dole will most likely meet the Kosovar leaders in Skopje, the capital of neighbouring Macedonia, a senior U.S. official said on condition of anonymity.

If ethnic Albanians sign the deal pushed by the United States and its European allies, all pressure would focus on Serbia, which is under the threat of NATO strikes if it remains defiant.

The deal does not offer the independence sought by ethnic Albanians, who make up 90 per cent of Kosovo's population. Rather it offers a broad autonomy within Serbia, the dominant republic in Yugoslavia.

"It is possible the Kosovo Albanian side will sign the agreement before the set

deadline on March 15," ethnic Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova told journalists.

Rugova said that signing by the Albanians before the deadline is "entirely up to the international mediators." He did not elaborate.

Kosovo Albanian negotiators balked at signing a deal when peace talks broke up last month in Rambouillet, France, but they promised to sign by the time talks resumed on March 15.

The Yugoslav government, led by President Slobodan Milosevic, said it would allow autonomy, but rejects the deal because of Western demands that the peace be enforced by up to 28,000 NATO soldiers.

Thursday, two Serb civilians and a policeman were reported killed by the ethnic Albanian Kosovo Liberation Army in late-night raids northwest of the provincial capital Pristina.

Dole has long been a proponent of the cause of Kosovo's Albanians. "He's someone who has a very good relationship with the Kosovar Albanians and he has taken a great personal interest in this subject," Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said of Dole.

As another part of the diplomatic offensive, the administration is considering sending Richard Holbrooke to Belgrade in the coming days to try to win Serb approval of the peace plan proposed by five major Western powers and

Russia. Holbrooke managed to pressure Milosevic in 1995 to sign a peace agreement for Bosnia.

And Albright will stop in London Saturday on her way home from an Asian tour to set up meetings on Kosovo with British officials.

If the push for peace fails, fighting could resume between the rebels and the combined forces of Serbian police and federal Yugoslav army.

In October, Holbrooke made Milosevic agree to a ceasefire in which he promised to scale back the number of troops stationed in Kosovo and keep them relatively confined to their barracks.

But according to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, charged with monitoring the ceasefire, the army has violated this, said Bearrice Lacoste, spokeswoman for the mission.

She said while the number of troops stationed in Kosovo remains under the required limit, the number of troops patrolling the province was often above the three companies allowed to be outside of each barracks at a time.

There are fears that Kosovo would explode in large-scale war if agreement is not reached at the talks scheduled to resume March 15. More than 2,000 people have been killed so far and hundreds of thousands displaced.

Japanese minister faces terminator threat in Schwarzenegger scandal

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's justice minister faced growing pressure Friday over an immigration blunder involving his hero, U.S. movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Key opposition parties demanded the 64-year-old minister, Shozaburo Nakamura, resign after he admitted keeping a document written by the U.S. star explaining his arrival here without a passport.

"We are at the stage where the justice minister has to resign or Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi has to consider (his own resignation)," said Tetsuzo Fuyushiba, secretary-general of the

opposition Komei Party. Nakamura would have to quit "to calm down the Diet," the opposition lawmaker told reporters.

Parliament has been suspended since opposition parties launched a boycott calling for his resignation.

Naoto Kan, leader of the largest opposition Democratic Party, said Thursday: "Mr. Nakamura does not deserve the post. He must make a decision now."

Chief cabinet secretary Hiromu Nonaka, who is leading an in-house investigation into the scandal, said he would give an answer to parliament later this month.

"It is regrettable that opposition parties are referring to the justice minister's resignation," Nonaka told a news conference.

"But I will report details of the facts at a final question and answer session at the upper house budget committee."

The prime minister declined to give his opinion.

"Since the chief cabinet secretary is investigating right now, I want to await the result," he told reporters.

Schwarzenegger flew into Osaka in a private plane last October to attend a groundbreaking ceremony for a

theme park. He reportedly explained his passport had been stolen when he could not produce a travel document.

The American actor was allowed to enter Japan with special permission after he wrote the report.

But it took nearly half a year for the document to reach the justice ministry's department in charge of immigration, giving rise to suspicions that Nakamura — a confessed Schwarzenegger fan — had kept it as a keepsake.

The justice minister told parliament he had approved Schwarzenegger's entry after seeing a faxed copy of

the report and the original report reached his office much later.

"I told my secretary to return it but it had apparently been left in the minister's office," said Nakamura, who became justice minister when Keizo Obuchi was elected prime minister last July.

"I and all in the family are Schwarzenegger fans," he said.

In January, Nakamura caused a storm when he suggested in a New Year's speech to justice ministry officials that Japan should revise its anti-war constitution to have a full-fledged military.

British balloonists head for Pacific, Swiss over Libya

LONDON (AFP) — British balloonists Andy Elson and Colin Prescott were still seeking a wind Friday to carry them across the Pacific Ocean and bracing themselves to fly at twice the height of Everest with no on-board heating.

The balloon's heating system failed soon after take off, but so far the pilots have been helped by a "low and slow" strategy of flying at or below 10,000 metres but rarely moving at more than 70 kilometres per hour.

The pair, who have already smashed endurance and distance records since taking off from Spain on Feb. 17, hope to become the first balloonists to fly non-

stop round the world. They were still looking for a strong wind Friday to carry them across the Pacific Ocean and bracing themselves to fly at twice the height of Everest with no on-board heating.

The balloon's heating system failed soon after take off, but so far the pilots have been helped by a "low and slow" strategy of flying at or below 10,000 metres but rarely moving at more than 70 kilometres per hour.

However, to catch the winds that will carry them at speeds of up to 300 kilometres per hour to Vancouver, they must rise to between 13,000 and

17,000 metres, making prolonged sub-zero temperatures in the cabin almost a certainty.

Even at that speed, the crossing will take four days.

Flight director Alan Ashpole told AFP: "They have Arctic survival clothing on board and should temperatures drop to an uncomfortable level they can put these on."

He added: "If it's too cold, they will have to come down. It's an unknown at the moment."

The balloon was forced to maintain a low altitude over Taiwan's airspace because of the area's busy air corridor.

It became an overnight

tourist attraction when a passenger jet pilot heading for Hong Kong asked permission to fly in close to allow people on board to take photos. The two Britons could see the camera flashes at the plane's windows.

The balloonists were expected to be half way to Japan by Saturday, while their challengers, Swiss Bertrand Piccard and Briton Brian Jones, were hoping to reach the Saudi-Yemen border by midnight Saturday, ground control in Geneva said.

Their Breidling Orbiter III balloon was over central Libya Friday and in the strong grip of outer jet stream winds, Monika

Pieren of the project management team said.

She said the balloon, which unlike the Cable and Wireless vessel has permission to overfly China, was travelling at 140 kilometres per hour at a height of 7,600 metres.

The Swiss psychologist and the former Royal Air Force pilot took off Monday from Chateau d'Oex in the Swiss Alps and plan to make up time on their rivals by overflying China after winning permission from Beijing.

They plan to end their global circumnavigation by landing at the foot of the pyramids outside the Egyptian capital Cairo.

Mother Teresa's order chooses priest in Rome to argue for her sainthood

CALCUTTA, India (AP) — A priest heading one of the missions Mother Teresa started in Rome will argue the case for her sainthood before the Vatican, a source in Calcutta said Friday.

The source, who is close to Mother Teresa's missionaries of charity and spoke on condition of anonymity, said Father Brian will arrive in Calcutta next week to begin research on Mother Teresa's life. As postulator, Father Brian will prepare a report arguing for Mother Teresa's sainthood that will be forwarded to the Vatican.

Father Brian was described as head of a missionaries of charity home in Rome. Few other details were available, but it appeared he would be ideally placed because he is

well-known both in the Vatican and in Calcutta.

The source said leading nuns at Missionaries of Charity headquarters in Calcutta unanimously chose Father Brian. The nuns had been meeting the last few days to appoint a postulator.

Mother Teresa died in 1997 at age 87 after a life spent nursing and comforting the poor and the outcast. Her Roman Catholic order spread from Calcutta, where it was founded in 1950, to a network of about 4,000 nuns and monks running some 600 schools, clinics, hospices, orphanages and other projects around the world.

The Vatican announced Sunday that Pope John Paul II had waived what is normally a mandatory wait of five years after death to

begin the process of conferring sainthood in Mother Teresa's case.

The first step to sainthood, beatification, requires the confirmation of a miracle. After beatification, research on a second miracle, needed for canonisation, can begin.

Already two miracles have been attributed to Mother Teresa, according to Catholic officials. In one case, a Frenchwoman broke several ribs in a car accident in the United States, but her injuries reportedly miraculously healed when she wore a Mother Teresa medallion around her neck.

Another miracle reported was that of a Palestinian girl suffering from cancer who was cured after Mother Teresa appeared in her dreams.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.
 جريدة تأمل بومية عربية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times Advertising Department

Prime focus

HIS MAJESTY King Abdullah's letter of designation to Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh to form a Cabinet was extensive, offering the first major look at the new era in Jordan. The 20 items delineated in the letter of designation to the new prime minister constitute the platform for the new stage.

The main task of the new government, as was clearly outlined in the letter, is to tackle the country's economic ills. The King directed veteran politician Rawabdeh to tackle rising unemployment and poverty by encouraging Jordanians to replace foreign labour and urging the government to press ahead with a much-delayed privatisation programme.

On the foreign policy front, it is unlikely we will see substantive change, but possibly a change in style. The King reiterated the late King Hussein's pillar of foreign policy in his letter of designation stressing the need to bolster pan-Arab relations and maintain peace with Israel, which he described as a "strategic choice," echoing a phrase often repeated by the late King.

While the King did call for "fundamental reforms" and a strengthening of democracy, the government was not assigned a definitive mandate or agenda for political and democratic reform. That there was no direct mention of the controversial election and press laws indicates that immediate changes in the status quo of these pieces of legislation should not be expected. Still, on the issue of freedom of the press, we foresee a smoother relationship between the fourth estate and the government with Nasser Lawzi, a liberal who has maintained a good rapport with the press through various Cabinet posts, at the helm. Also, judging from the track records of Premier Rawabdeh and Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabariti, the relationship with the media should prove more open, as both sharply criticised the restrictive press law last summer from their seats in the House and Senate.

The job cut out for Rawabdeh — waging war against nepotism, corruption, incompetence in public service, as well as modernising and trimming the country's bloated bureaucracy — is a Herculean task.

Even with the odds stacked against him, the new prime minister — with his extensive experience and knowledge, his confidence and boldness, and his reputation as a hands-on doer — may well be the person for the job.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneh said that with a new King, it is natural to designate a new government in accordance with constitutional customs and it is a sign that the new King is in charge and has started his own programme. Although it is too early to talk about the new government's programme, it is "naïve" to wait for its official statement, which will be submitted to the Lower House of Parliament to earn the vote of confidence, added Faneh. The writer said that in politics, he expected the relations with all Arab countries to be strengthened, the Palestinian National Authority to be supported and the peace process to be continued. The relations with Israel depends on the Jewish state's behaviour, which does not hold any great hope, according to the writer, who added that if the Jordanian government will not interfere in other countries' internal affairs, it will not allow any party to interfere in its own affairs or threaten the country's stability. It is certain that the economic situation will be on the top of the new government's agenda, which will include restoring economic growth, eliminating corruption in the public and private sectors, attracting Arab and foreign investment and going ahead with privatisation, said Faneh. The new government has inherited problems, difficulties and challenges, some of them need immediate action, while others will take time to be solved, Faneh said adding that current optimism should be exploited.

Al Dustour's editorial said His Majesty King Abdullah's designated Abdul Ra'ouf Rawabdeh to form the King's first government in order to continue the Kingdom's construction process, which was established by His Majesty King Hussein. The Letter of Designation reflects Jordan's main concerns at this stage regarding improving the economy and strengthening national unity and democracy, added the editorial. There is no doubt that all Jordanians share with King Abdullah the hope that the new government will achieve its aims and set up plans to meet the challenges facing the country, said the paper. It is obvious that King Abdullah's directives reflect his views and vision about strengthening national construction in all fields, including supporting the Armed Forces and the security services, said the editorial. The letter stressed the importance of eliminating corruption and administrative incompetence by establishing specialised institutions that will work as one team, rehabilitating the public administration. At the same time the letter of designation stressed the need to treat economic depression, demanding efforts to eliminate unemployment and poverty, obstacles facing growth and sustainable development, said the editorial.

U.S.-Israel special relations: Spies, blackmail and phone-tapping

Jordanian Perspective



Dr. Musa Keilani

NOTWITHSTANDING emphatic White House denials, people in the Middle East do not find it difficult to believe that the Israeli secret service, Mossad, blackmailed U.S. President Bill Clinton with tapes of his telephone conversations with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

Having lived through the deceitful activities of Israel and often as victims, the Arabs know very well that Israeli intelligence agencies are always on the lookout for any opportunity to gain leverage.

In this case, Clinton's indiscretion with Lewinsky appeared to have been delivered to Mossad on a platter and the purportedly taped conversations, were used to pressure the White House into calling off a hunt for an Israeli "mole" right in the Oval Office. At least that is what has been reported so far, but, knowing Israel, we find it naïve to accept that the purported blackmail was limited to the "mole" case. But then, the possibility remains strong that Mossad's access to the White House and presidential communi-

cations has been a way of life in Washington for many years. It would not be a figment of the imagination to assume that Israeli blackmail could also perhaps explain the occasionally illogical and strange behaviour of U.S. presidents in cases involving Israel's arrogance.

It is not the first time that Israel abuses its "privileged" relationship with the U.S. and nor will it be the last. We have seen dozens of episodes of Israel's underhand actions in the U.S., including proven charges of spying by Israeli agents, including Jonathan Pollard.

Adding insult to us Arabs were the revelations that Pollard had handed over details of the defence of the Arab countries to Israel. Obviously, the U.S. was in a position to possess such classified information by virtue of its being the major supplier of arms and defence systems to most Arab countries.

The international community is well aware of Israel's arrogant behaviour and deception, but it is

unable to adopt any effective counteraction because of the staunch protection offered by Washington to its spoiled protégé.

If anything, the American intelligence community has been a partner in covering up Israel's deceitful actions for many reasons, prominent among them the heavy pro-Israeli pressure applied by the Zionist lobby as well as the very embarrassment caused to American intelligence agencies.

The bottom line is that if the U.S. wants to continue to sidestep such Israeli actions and is resigned to accepting that as part of its "strategic relationship" with the Jewish state, then the world has little to say. After all, why should a neighbour be concerned if a cuckolded husband is not concerned? But the issue goes beyond that in this particular case.

Any Israeli "blackmail" of the White House has wideranging implications for the Arabs, given the very nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The first question that comes to mind is what was the extent of

that blackmail and what actions and policy decisions that was the White House blackmailed into adopting in return for Israel opting to keep the reported 30 hours of secret tapes under wraps? We have always taken it for granted that the political "affinity" between the U.S. and Israel, the pro-Israeli lobby in Washington and Christian fundamentalist sympathy for Tel Aviv were the main factors behind the almost unlimited

political, military, economic and moral support that the U.S. extends to the Israeli. Now, it seems, blackmail is also behind it, and it might perhaps explain why Washington had been unable to twist the Israeli arm when it needed to be twisted in the cause of peace in the Middle East.

Well, now we know it and are wiser for it, for whatever that is worth.

But it should be a matter of high international concern that Mossad was in a position to secretly record U.S. presidential telephone calls.

So far, it has been reported that the extent of the wiretapping was limited to Lewinsky. But that is what we are told. How do we or the rest of the world know that Israel was not in a fortified position to anticipate American action and thinking in any part of the world and did not exploit such information to turn the course of world politics? Far-fetched as it might sound, the international community might as well ask the question to itself.

Bananas: A threat to world peace?

Out of Order



Brian Brown

THE BANANA. You wouldn't think that such a delicious, versatile, seemingly innocuous fruit would present such a danger to civilisation. But, if the looming trade war between the U.S. and the EU over bananas comes to pass, future generations may curse the banana instead of remembering it fondly as a healthy, potassium-rich snack.

Now, I'm not a believer in the various end-of-the-millennium disaster scenarios, and, as a matter of making life easier for myself, I try to discourage other rational persons from putting too much stock in them, either. Certain events, however, such as the U.S.-EU banana row, undermine all of these efforts. Coming so close to the year 2000, this trade dispute offers those parties anticipating the end of the world even more ammunition to back their already formidable arguments, the centrepiece of which being the pernicious Millennium Bug problem.

It doesn't seem so dramatic on the surface. The U.S. wants Europe to import bananas grown by its major corporations in Latin America; the EU prefers to buy from smaller producers in the Caribbean. But, as often happens in the international arena, things quickly escalated. The United States, basing its action on earlier World Trade Organisation rulings, has slapped huge tariffs on a range of European

goods to compensate for the millions of dollars it claims American businesses are losing due to EU policies. European countries, which regard the U.S. move as an unsanctioned unilateral step, are fuming. And this could be just the opening shot in a protracted confrontation, because the U.S. has already signalled it may press Europe to import goods and foodstuffs more controversial than bananas, such as hormone-treated beef (still, it should have a marketing advantage of its mad cow beef competitor).

Oddly, neither the U.S. nor Europe seem to be attaching much importance to the world's largest banana-producing country, Ecuador, which has been left out of the picture. Also conspicuously absent is mention of the appalling conditions that most banana industry workers have to endure. When it comes to a trade war, both the U.S. and the EU know

what matters, and it's certainly not logic or decent working conditions for people who, at the end of the day, make it possible for the world's two largest trading powers to bicker over bananas.

This is what I fear that those in the pro-"end-of-the-world" camp will seize upon: the fact that the world's two largest economies are already at each other's throat. Since the demise of the Soviet Union, people have been casting about for a new superpower, and the EU is the perfect candidate. It has a suitable number of citizens, it's technologically advanced, and, to bring back that old Cold War atmosphere, two member states possess nuclear arms. Assuming that the EU can pull it together (i.e., the euro does not fall on its face) and make it to superpower status, persons predicting a major global confrontation in the near future could paint the following picture. In the aftermath of the Banana Incident, as it may become ruefully known to future historians, both the U.S. and EU begin scrambling for markets and "spheres of influence." The U.S. enlists Japan, South America, and Australia, while the EU takes in Russia, Africa and the rest of Asia. Both powers continue competing in the economic arena until the inevitable military conflict shatters NATO and leads down the road to the

Letters to the editor

Israeli failure in Lebanon

AS A highly pro-Israeli Jewish American, I normally don't agree with the Jordan Times editorials (which I read every morning), and probably derive the same amount of amusement out of that you do from reading the Israeli press.

However, I must admit that Rami Khouri's column ("South Lebanon: God's latest sacred killing ground" JT, March 2.) hit very close to home.

In my opinion, the current Israeli military/political policy in South Lebanon is a painful failure. Either Israel must withdraw to the international border, with the clear understanding that ANY attacks on northern Israeli settlements will result in destruction of vital Lebanese AND Syrian targets, or Israel must establish a totally depopulated zone north of its border deep enough where anything that moves is a legitimate military target. Continued incursions would result in a deepening of the depopulated zone, until a political solution which meets everyone's legitimate grievances and concerns is in place and enforced by the Lebanese government.

Maintaining the current status quo is, and I agree with you, untenable and immoral.

Howard Grad
 Alexandria, VA.
 U.S.

Purim restrictions reasonable

DAOUD KUTTAB'S article (Living like human beings, JT March 4-5) which implies that Israel's decision to restrict entry to Palestinians during Purim was unreasonably harsh, and overlooks a very important point.

The only reason that Israel closes its borders to most Palestinians during Jewish holidays — and Purim is indeed a "religious holiday" — is because Palestinian nationalists choose precisely those days to carry out bombings against Israeli civilians.

We all commiserate with the Tirawi family for not being able to keep a medical appointment in Israel during Purim. Likewise, we sympathise with Hani Shaker's delayed concert. But the prevention of murderous attacks against Israeli civilians will take precedence over all else.

Perhaps, some day it will not be considered a meritorious act to blow up a city bus full of women and children.

Avraham Nahoumi
 Nahoumi@aol.com

Ban Falaqa!

IN LIGHT of the children rights campaign which is being launched (Children's taskforce kicks off rights awareness campaign, JT, March 2), I am writing to lobby the taskforce responsible, to please consider outlawing "Falaqa" as the first item on their agenda for some very serious intrinsic consideration.

The practice of Falaqa consists of beating the naked sole of the foot with a stick or belt, and is one of the most excruciating tortures a human can inflict on another, that is: short of more advanced techniques such as electrical jolts etc.

I recall being sentenced to receive Falaqa twice in my lifetime during elementary schooldays. It is now thirty five years after the fact and I still remember very vividly that horrifying experience, although I have long since forgotten what was the nature of the infraction that earned the Falaqa.

I am asking the committee responsible for establishing children rights not to allow Falaqa into the next century.

Hatem Abunimeh
 Abunimeh@uic.edu

Letter of condolence

I WOULD like to offer my belated condolences on the death of King Hussein.

Mitch Klingner
 Toronto, Canada
 mitchwk@idirect.com

Vatican to lobby U.S. over Jerusalem

By George S. Hishmeh

WASHINGTON — The Vatican has apparently put the issue of Jerusalem, which Israel has unilaterally claimed as its "unified and eternal" capital, on its front burner now that the inconclusive Mideast peace process is approaching its deadline quickly next May. It is sending its top diplomat to Washington next week to lobby the Clinton administration, Congress and the American public.

Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran, the Vatican foreign secretary, will arrive in Washington on March 7 for talks with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright among others in the U.S. government, and leaders of the Catholic Church here, including the 150 Catholic members of the U.S. Congress. He will also be travelling to New York for meetings with top U.N. officials on the subject.

Prior to his meeting with U.S. officials, he will be participating in an unprecedented "roundtable meeting" with American Muslim and Arab American leaders and scholars to discuss the question of Jerusalem at a closed session at Georgetown University's Centre of Muslim-Christian Understanding.

Besides this significant gesture, he will deliver on March 9 a talk titled "The Holy See and the Middle East" to an invited audience at the Catholic University here in which he is expected to outline the Vatican's position on certain aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This undertaking by the Vatican, a senior American Catholic official explained to this writer, can be attributed to the efforts of the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, Michel Sabbah, who organised a meeting of bishops last October in the Holy City. Archbishop Tauran delivered the keynote address there, which has received little attention here.

American Christians have received a poor press in the Arab world primarily because of the loud activities of American Christian fundamentalists among whose leaders is Rev. Jerry Falwell, a staunch supporter of Israel because his sect subscribes to a literal interpretation of the Bible.

But this does not mean that the mainstream Protestant denominations and the Catholics are mum about the Middle East, though they may be somewhat reticent about taking high-profile advocacy positions. In fact, there exists in Washington a coalition of 17 churches and church organisations known as Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP).

This ecumenical working group, whose able director is Corinne Whitlatch, has been active since 1984 in maintaining an "ongoing dialogue" with Congress and the Administration and has dealt admirably and forthrightly on such issues as house demolitions in the Israeli-occupied territories, sanctions against Iraq and U.S.-Iranian relations. Their most significant activity last year included the placement of an advertisement calling for a "shared" Jerusalem in American newspapers published in Detroit, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Boston, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco. The same advertisement appeared in the New York Times in December 1996.

At the Jerusalem meeting, Archbishop Tauran declared that Arab East Jerusalem was "illegally occupied" by the Israelis and repeated a longstanding Vatican demand that the Holy City be protected by a "special, internationally guaranteed statute." Tauran dropped a bombshell at the Jerusalem meeting when he declared that "any possible (political) solution should have the support of the three monotheistic religions." He explained it is "wrong to claim that the Holy See is only interested in the religious aspect or aspects of the city

and overlooks the political and territorial aspect." The Vatican aide advocated that "other parties could be invited to contribute" toward finding a settlement just as the sponsors of the peace process and this could be done by "extending representation at the negotiating table in order to be sure that no aspect of the problems is overlooked and to affirm that the whole international community is responsible for the uniqueness and sacredness of this incomparable city." He also emphasised that "every exclusive claim — be it religious or political — is contrary to the logic proper to the very city itself" and added that the Holy See wants the Holy City to be protected by "a special internationally guaranteed statute" that will preserve the religious and cultural characteristics of the city.

Whitlatch did not seem hopeful when she reviewed the "legislative and policy outlook for Middle East issues in 1999" in a recent position paper circulated by Churches for Middle East Peace. For example, she saw no change in "the unwillingness of the Clinton-Gore administration to exert any pressure on the Israeli government" and pinned her hope on a change in the Israeli government as a result of the upcoming elections this summer.

As far as the Congressional deadline for moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem this year, she thought the Clinton administration "will likely use a presidential waiver to again postpone carrying out the law's requirement." The hope here among concerned Americans is that the Vatican and the other mainstream Protestant denominations as well as the so-called historic peace churches will exert during the visit by Tauran and thereafter every effort to bring to the forefront the issue of Jerusalem, probably one of the thorniest final status problems that remains to be settled between Palestinians and Israelis.

Feature
 His Ma
 to new

ON THE MOVIE
 B. J. Brown

His Majesty King Abdullah's Letter of Designation to new PM Abdul Rawouf Al Rawabdeh

Our dear brother Mr. Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh

I AM sending you true affection and deep appreciation. We have known you as one of the great, well-seasoned and loyal men of Jordan; a man with true affiliation and allegiance to your leadership and nation, daring and brave in upholding righteousness, a trustworthy Jordanian working with diligence and loyalty. Known for competence and integrity in every position you have assumed throughout your long service to the Throne and nation.

I am addressing you at a moment which witnesses a new promising stage. I have assumed responsibility succeeding my great father, may God bless his soul. Along with the loyal Jordanian people, the late King has built a nation with sweat and efforts creating an oasis of security, stability and great achievements. The present stage, with its circumstances, given and requirements calls for cohesiveness and harmony, a united and mobilised march encompassing all efforts to finalise national construction, develop the institutions and carry out fundamental reforms in all fields.

As Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh's government has now resigned, I entrust you with the formation of a government for the new stage, hoping that it will comprise efficient and distinguished leaders able to shoulder the heavy burdens, foremost of which is the task of rejuvenating the national economy in cooperation with the various forces, and the private and public sectors and enhancing the Jordanian citizen's capacity in meeting life's challenges. It will be a government that can solidify democracy, stress the rule of law, strengthen national unity, preserve national security and stability and manage the affairs of the nation in a climate of justice, integrity and good performance.

The present stage requires the setting of plans and clear approaches which determine the needs and concerns of citizens, the establishment of practical solutions to meet these needs and concerns, and the realistic application of these objectives within the nation's means. Therefore, it is imperative to focus on the following:

1. National unity constitutes one of the basic components which empowers the nation and gives it strength and prevents any disruption or penetration. Jordan has always served as a home for all Arabs, a model society for the cohesive and united family in good and bad times, a country where all people are partners in work and construction and committed to protecting the homeland and its interests. All Jordanians, men and women, regardless of their ethnic origin, religion and views are equal before the law and partners in performing their duties and in enjoying benefits. Strengthening national unity comes about through the rule of law for all, without discrimination. It is achieved by solidifying democracy, safeguarding human rights, and applying justice on sound and clear foundations. The government will achieve a balance among the country's various regions, will apply the law with firmness against all those who seek to disrupt national unity. The state, with its constitutional authorities, is the sole representative of the entire people and it is responsible for protecting the rights of all factions. Duty requires from us to unify all efforts so that citizens can form a united force with consolidated ranks to build the nation, protect its security and stability and help shape a bright future

with God's will.

2. Democracy serves as the best model for life, but it constantly requires deepening of its meanings and mass education at its very roots and exercise through education and national guidance. Our legislative institution is a source of pride for us and for our nation. It is a true representative of our people's will. We look forward to close cooperation between the executive and legislative authorities to protect the country's higher national interests within the framework of commitment to constitutional powers for each. We underline the need for all facilities to help the legislative authority carry out its task and we call for deepening of responsible dialogue with all national institutions within a framework of commitment and the principles of the Constitution, free of fanaticism and free of attempts to disregard others' views. Wisdom is an objective sought by the faithful and we all are partners in shouldering responsibility for the dear homeland and its progress.

3. We take pride in our Jordanian judiciary, its independence and its performance. We call for supporting the judiciary through developing a law to ensure the independence of the judiciary and through improving the working conditions of the judges and promoting legislation that governs the judicial process in order to facilitate and speed up the process of securing the rights of all. Prompt justice is bound to enhance citizens' confidence and reassure them of their rights and freedoms.

4. Our valiant Armed Forces serve as the title of our pride as they protect the homeland and democracy. The Armed Forces reflected the bright image of our nation in all fields at the local, pan-Arab and international levels. It is incumbent upon your government to provide support, modern arms and care to the Armed Forces so that they can remain committed to their pledge, performing their sacred duty in defending the homeland, contributing towards protecting peace in the region, and rendering distinguished service in sharing in protecting world peace in various parts of the world. Our security services which safeguard the nation and its citizens, require full support and the most modern means in order to carry out their duties of ensuring stability for the nation and reassurance for its citizens. They enjoy the backing and appreciation of all Jordanian citizens.

5. A Public administration which can achieve objectives at less cost and in shorter time is a wise and efficient administration which helps to create effective and specialised institutions acting with team spirit under efficient and able leadership marked by integrity, placing the public interest above all other considerations. It is one that is characterised by justice, initiative and creativity, focusing on field work, confronting problems before they arise and before they become too complicated to solve. This administration should be free of the ills of exploitation, favouritism, and manipulation. Public administration requires restructuring to prevent any overlapping of duty and duality and also calls for the choice of leaders and employees on the basis of efficiency, experience and integrity, free of factionalism and fanaticism for any purpose or party. It also requires modernisation of all procedures with the purpose of simplifying and facilitating people's access to services without extra effort and cost. Administrative and financial corruption destroys societies and weakens states and countries. Our public administration has constantly been marked by efficient

cy and integrity, has set examples with its good performance and achievements, and has made valuable contributions to the administrations of other Arab societies. However, some pockets of dereliction, incompetence and unreliability have started to appear. If no action is taken to put an end to them, such behaviour is certain to spread and it is something which we can not allow to happen and which we will counter firmly. Thus the government is required to place controls and introduce measures which will restore the bright image of our administration and confront all aspects of dereliction and corruption with force. It should remove all elements which have a tendency or encourage such negative behaviour, regardless of their position or responsibilities. The public administration should refer to our fair judiciary any persons who abuse or exploit public positions and those who try to mass fortunes or allow others to do so by exploiting their positions.

6. Unemployment and poverty are two major concerns for the country impeding the process of growth and adversely affecting the nation's capabilities. They are also causing further suffering for citizens for whom we, as Hashemites, are constantly trying to provide an honourable life with all our potential and efforts. Therefore, the government should place at the top of its priorities the question of confronting these two problems through comprehensive development in all domains, through enhancing the role of the social aid funds and integrate their work and unify their administrative umbrella and implement the social safety net plan in a serious manner. The government should conduct a practical and realistic study of the situation to determine the extent of the problem with a view to dealing with it, not waiting for complaints to come. Citizens have the right to work and to an honourable life. No obstacles or justifications should stand in their way of attaining them. The government should act promptly and seriously and in accordance with a clear plan towards replacing guest workers with local people and should speed up the process of exporting a Jordanian labour force to brotherly countries which have shown understanding in this area.

7. Jordan's economy is facing recession for different reasons. The national economic restructuring programme has succeeded in realising many achievements but it requires a revision in light of changes and new developments and this should be done in cooperation with specialised regional and international institutions which have expressed desire to help, and in conjunction with the private sector whose contributions and achievements enjoy our appreciation. This is required in order to deal with the imbalances, create the opportune climate for investments, removing obstacles impeding investment and unifying the party dealing with this sector. Restructuring is also necessary to ensure the fair distribution of national income to all sectors, to increase savings and rationalise consumption, boost production and exports, create new jobs, give due attention to tourism, transport and other services, as well as to mineral resources, introduce plans for agriculture that can ensure better income for farmers acquire new types of crops that would boost farmers' income and consume less water, make available equipment for production and provide soft loans for the purpose. The process of privatisation is in need of development by modernising its institutions and defining their policy in a transparent manner to safeguard

public funds, and their use.

8. Despite its achievements, the educational process is in need of constant development to raise its level and improve its output. The government should give due attention to national education and enhance the sense of national belonging. It should focus on dialogue in an atmosphere of moderation and tolerance, giving due attention to educational technology, raising the proficiency of teachers, improving their living conditions, enhancing the role of universities as minarets of creativity, free thinking and expression, free of fanaticism, and turning out highly educated people able to show good performance that can contribute to the spreading of knowledge and national awareness.

9. We need to give care to culture and the development of cultural institutions which can attract competent persons to release the potential of creativity which reflects our people's true image and their active role in the culture of the nation and its causes. Such elements should bear the sense of national belonging and uphold the values of righteousness and justice, opening the country to the cultures of the world rather than having a tendency towards introversion.

10. Our national media needs constant attention so that it truly reflects the country's image, its march towards democracy, its achievements, and the climate of responsible freedom in which it is living. Jordan is in need of an efficient media institution contributing towards spreading awareness and national guidance, one that can convey Jordan's message to the whole world through free and responsible press characterised by seriousness, balance and enjoying credibility. We need broadcasting services which address the nation's concerns, reflecting its actual situation, and attract people with honest and objective views regardless of their opinions and thoughts. This should take place within the framework of freedom and responsible expression, not damaging the country's values, achievements and exploiting the atmosphere of democracy in order to hurt it. We require a media that can evaluate with awareness and offers positive criticism. A word is a curing remedy in the hand of a sincere official and a killing sword in the hand of an unjust one.

11. This country takes pride in the message of Islam and its irrevocable legacy. We as Hashemites take pride in this patrimony. Therefore we must project a bright image of Islam and we must confront all attempts at distorting it from any source. We must give due concern to religious guidance with all that it stands for: values of cooperation, fraternity and affection free of any bigotry. We must develop our mosque institutions and their pulpits as a means for propagating God's teachings, wisdom and good morals and we must have well-trained and fair preachers and we must take care of their affairs.

12. Our health services are a distinguished example in the region. We need to give these services due attention and deal with all aspects of regression of such services and must work towards raising their efficiency and providing good health service to the public as close as possible to their places of residence.

It is essential to re-examine the health policy in terms of institutions, capabilities, equipment and management. We must, in the near future, expand the health insurance umbrella in order to be able to reach comprehensive health insurance that would include all, especially those with limited income to be able to enjoy model health care services.

We must promote preventive medicine and give due concern to therapeutic tourism and providing facilities and organisation that would promote them in the service of the national economy.

13. Our consumption of energy and water is on the increase. We import our energy, and our water resources are meagre.

We are in need of intensifying our search and prospective for new sources of energy specially oil shale. We must find new water resources and build more dams, ration water consumption, speed up the installation of new water networks, and wastewater treatment plants. Drought is of serious consequence to the farmers and livestock breeders. Therefore concerned institutions should give utmost attention to farmers to help them overcome the adverse effects of drought.

14. The environment is being exposed to damage and it needs special attention that guarantees activating and developing legislation to protect the environment, to make available specialised and efficient cadres capable of carrying out serious fieldwork. We need to involve all private and public institutions and organisations in protecting soil, water and air from pollution, and protecting the agricultural land and combating soil erosion and desertification. We need to protect the natural reserves and create more forests, and carry out a comprehensive national effort to plant and develop forest areas.

15. The youth are the future of the country, and it is essential to release their potential and direct them towards public and national service. These potentials should be organised in collective frameworks that include all parts of the country and utilise the youths' pastime in activities that will be of use to them and the nation.

Focus should be on education and vocational training with the objective of meeting the country's needs of trained labour to replace the foreign workforce. The professional associations and labour unions should play a leading role in promoting trades and providing the best service to citizens. The sports institutions need attention and support and reorganisation to enhance their role in preparing the youth, releasing their potential and instilling moral values, healthy competition and national pride. The upcoming 9th Pan-Arab Games (Al Hussein Games) require due attention and distinguished efforts for their success to be worthy of carrying the name of the great late King.

16. The role of women has assumed added importance. The Jordanian women's role has developed through their participation in numerous social, political, and economic fields making women an essential pillar in the country's development and construction. Therefore we need to highlight this role especially in the rural regions and the badia. We have been witnessing some phenomena that has aggravated the suffering of women and violated their basic rights. We look forward to witnessing amendments to legislation that deprive them of their rights or do them injustice and provide them all facilities to help them carry out their role as partners in work and construction without any discrimination of preferentialism. Children are also in need of care and protection from violence, homelessness and abuse. We need to ensure natural and balanced growth for children within the family and the society and through social care institutions.

17. Jordan has been offering the Palestinian brothers support and participation on the basis of fraternity and the one des-

tiny. Jordan has played a prominent role in the Palestine issue since its inception until today and stood by the Palestinian National Authority with all its might. My father, the late King Hussein played a key role in this concern to help attain an honourable and just solution and to overcome all impediment they face. We will continue to support these brothers in different forms and means to help the Palestinian people regain their legitimate rights and establish their independent state on their national soil. We look forward to establishing distinguished relations with the independent Palestinian state that express the distinguished relations between the two brotherly people at their free will, making these relations a model that can always be developed.

18. Jordan has always and will continue to constitute an integral part of its Arab nation and will be active in pan-Arab political action, seeking to achieve agreement and consensus and seeking to build strong ties of constructive cooperation among all Arab states to overcome all causes of difference based on our joint goals and destiny. We reemphasise the need for maintaining strong ties with all brothers based on affection, confidence, cooperation and mutual respect. The government has to pursue the process of dialogue with all the Arab states, without any exception, and promote our ties with them. We have witnessed the Arab countries' stand during the funeral of the late King and we need to build on this stand and safeguard higher Arab interests. We must be keen on safeguarding Arab countries' sovereignty without interfering in their internal affairs. We will continue to work towards ending the suffering of the Iraqi, Libyan and Sudanese people. We must stand firmly by our brothers in Syria, and Lebanon to regain their occupied territories.

19. Jordan enjoys a good reputation and respect from various countries of the world, a status that was created by the great late King through his efforts, credibility and diligence. This has been acknowledged by world leaders in the best manner in what the world has called the funeral of the 20th century. We should pursue efforts to activate our international relations in a framework of cooperation, joint interests and mutual respect. We must clarify Jordan's role in an objective and responsible manner in all regional and international fora. We need to develop and upgrade our diplomatic institution in a manner that defines their goals and duties in a clear manner and guarantees efficient leaderships with a true sense of belonging and guarantees active management.

20. Peace is our strategic option and it is so for our Arab brothers. We seek a just and durable peace for all on all tracks based on justice and on international legitimacy and international charters. We believe in peace as a means for security, stability and development. We will continue to insist on the march for peace as we are quite certain that the will and insistence of peoples will eventually overcome all obstacles, and impediments until it prevails in the entire region and helps it achieve progress and prosperity.

While reaffirming the need for the government to be committed to our directives and translating them into actions, we express absolute confidence in this government as we await your recommended list of ministers wishing you luck and success.

The Saturday Crossword

ON THE MOVE

By Josiah Breward, Scranton, Pennsylvania

ACROSS

- 1 Single-masted sailing vessels
- 7 Cheap cigar
- 13 Way off the mark
- 20 Singing wisp
- 21 Greetings
- 22 Two-syllable foot
- 23 Ethnic issue
- 25 Temporary cars
- 26 Too quickly
- 27 No longer in use
- 29 Fig. of speech
- 30 Simon Theater
- 31 College figs.
- 34 European nat.
- 35 Hereditary factor
- 36 Hall of Leno's show
- 37 Thai or Korean, e.g.
- 39 Former Russian rulers
- 42 Open area of a blood vessel
- 43 Worldwide revolutionary communists
- 45 Chapter of the Koran
- 46 Melonlike fruit
- 47 Finnish bath
- 50 Country on Lake Tanganyika
- 53 Menu option
- 55 Mothers

DOWN

- 56 Delight
- 57 "Star Wars" pilot
- 58 Legal permission
- 59 Car panel
- 61 grata arts
- 62 Act as a lookout, e.g.
- 63 Nabokov heroine
- 65 Kimono sash
- 66 Gudrun's victim
- 67 Greek letter or cross
- 68 Discardance
- 73 Fused (ores)
- 76 Naut. direction
- 77 Greek god of war
- 78 Ford or Dodge, e.g.
- 79 Island hopper
- 80 Holy
- 82 French actress
- 83 Jeanna
- 84 Keaton and Ladd
- 85 Victory signs
- 86 Author of "The Moviegoer"
- 88 Composer
- 89 Charles Camille
- 90 Saint
- 90 Glass pieces
- 91 City on the Rhine
- 92 School trainees, in brief
- 95 Wear out
- 96 Sportscastr

Scully

- 97 Jal
- 98 Math subj.
- 99 Writer's writings, in brief
- 100 Sins
- 104 Make bigger
- 107 Lurie and Krauss
- 109 Utensil for serving hors d'oeuvres
- 112 Reveals
- 113 Tampers
- 114 "Nausea" novelist
- 115 "2001: A Space"
- 116 Lethal
- 117 Balanced conditions
- 118 Lethal
- 119 Balanced conditions
- 120 Silent, in music
- 121 Arizona city
- 122 Lifted
- 123 Gaudin's pride
- 124 "Open, sesame!" guy
- 125 School in New York City
- 126 M. Pascal
- 127 Roseanne's TV kid
- 128 Guts
- 129 Swabbie
- 129 June honoree
- 130 Singer George?'
- 131 Opposite of prof.
- 132 Set to rest
- 133 Fills completely
- 134 Most on the Mosaic

GI

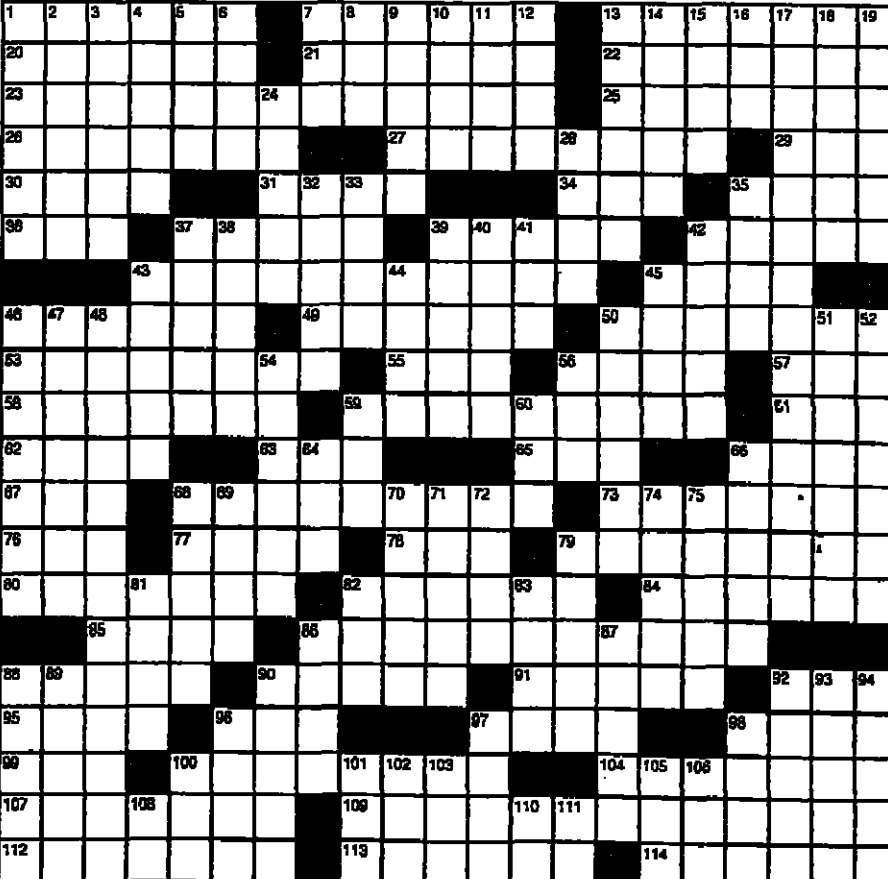
- 16 GI
- 17 Bank of America
- 18 Add new padding
- 19 Synophants
- 24 On the up-and-up
- 28 "I Remember Mama" character
- 32 Out of fashion
- 33 "Diana" singer
- 35 Spiritual adviser
- 37 Indo-Iranian
- 38 Travels by glider
- 39 Turner and Louise
- 40 Secret supply
- 41 '50s Democrat
- 42 Enticed
- 43 Silent, in music
- 44 Arizona city
- 45 Lifted
- 46 Gaudin's pride
- 47 "Open, sesame!" guy
- 48 School in New York City
- 49 M. Pascal
- 50 Roseanne's TV kid
- 51 Guts
- 52 Swabbie
- 53 June honoree
- 54 Singer George?'
- 55 Opposite of prof.
- 56 Set to rest
- 57 Fills completely
- 58 Most on the Mosaic

Act parts

- 94 Act parts
- 96 Locale
- 97 Rainbow-shaped
- 98 "It's a Wonderful Life" director
- 100 Relatives of raspberries
- 101 Folk-song abbr.
- 102 Ditty
- 103 Sicilian resort
- 105 Capone's undoer
- 106 Coll. exam
- 108 Draft letters
- 110 Adjective-forming suffix
- 111 Old-time journalist
- 112 Nellie

Last Sunday's Crossword Solved

REPINE JEFF WEBS ELMS
 OBERON OMAR ISAO NOAH
 BREASTED BREASTED TUNE
 GORNE DIE ELDER HENNA
 SEGER FLOE LONGER
 MOVING EITAU LICER
 CRAB BARRIED BARRIED
 ETNA LUTER RUINS EELY
 THESESE GOLDS SNAKE
 LADIES PAROL HATRED
 ALIVE DEANO ACCIDE
 DINE MENISA AROAR NOGO
 STANARD STANARD DALLI
 CRIBES POST CARFUL
 TANGENT AMEN ABRESST
 ATASE EVER HOLST
 STAGE EXIST JOE WALTZ
 TITIT EXPOSURE EXPOSURE
 ELLEN ELLEN RARA ARISEN
 DARE ELUS ETON SKATES



Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Private hospitals clash with Income Tax Department over financial statements

** "PRIVATE HOSPITALS will go to court to settle disputes with the Income Tax Department if current contacts to resolve the differences do not succeed," warned Mahmoud Al Taher, president of the society grouping private hospitals. Summarising the problem, Taher said the Income Tax Department has surprised the private hospitals by adding between JD200,000 and JD400,000 to the 1998 annual balance sheets presented by the hospitals for calculating the income tax on the assumption that that is the real financial statement of the hospitals.

"This method of dealing with the private hospitals cannot be accepted as it reflects distrust in the management and credibility of private hospitals," Taher stressed. "We totally reject this method which will have a negative effect on the activity and work of the private health sector in the Kingdom." He said the issue was presented to the prime minister with a request to find a fundamental solution to this problem which has become a real barrier to the work of private hospitals. Taher demanded that the private sector in the country enjoy the same treatment that the Income Tax Department give to other sectors.

It should be noted here that the department has been seeking secret reports and statements related to doctors working in private hospitals but was totally rebuffed and sharply denounced by everybody including the Ministry of Health. The ministry

has rejected the attempts of the department to obtain the aforementioned information on the grounds that it is not a legitimate right for the Income Tax Department which is trying to determine the real income of doctors in the private sector.

"Our disputes with the department are old and us, as private hospitals, are not concerned to disclose the income of any citizen working for us because that is against democracy, personal human rights and professional secrecy," he emphasised as he called on the department to seek other means to obtain the figures and statements it wants. He concluded that the department has now stopped looking into the income tax of hospitals until it gets special statements of what the doctors earn in income besides imposing the aforementioned amounts.

Management sources at the Income Tax Department said the authority suffers from false information provided by most taxpayers. Noting that the department only takes 25 per cent of the net income, the sources denied that additional amounts were imposed on the balance sheets presented by private hospitals. They described the issue as inaccurate because "the department accepts the balance sheet as presented and in case there is doubt in the figures provided, the department resorts to other means such as further proof" (Al Dustour).

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You're probably not a natural poker player. Everybody knows whether you have a good hand or not, just by the look on your face. But you can learn. Today, you'll get the chance to practice. It's not the same as lying if you don't tell everything you know to everyone who asks.

Taurus: (April 20 to May 20) Somebody with the authority to say no is quite likely to do exactly that. But you might be able to override that authority. Maybe you and your buddy can outvote, or win over, him or her. Today, don't take the first no or even the second one for an answer.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Conditions are perfect for working with a team on a big project. Know anybody who's putting up a barn? Doesn't look like you'll make much money this weekend, but the contacts and the good impression you can make will be more valuable. Put on a good show — you're being watched!

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) This should be a lovely weekend, one of your best all year. You'd better call your favourite travelling companion and get an early start. If you hang around too long, an older person will give you a list of things to do. Don't even allow yourself to feel obligated. Sneak away and play! That's an order!

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) If a roommate or close family member has plans, just go along. You could argue, but you might as well save your breath. Acquiesce to one who cares more than you do. You'll make brownie points that'll redeemable later. Besides, it might be nice to it somebody else run the show for a change.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Practice skills you've been learning lately. That's the only way you'll master them. Reputation will lead to mastery, which is what you want to achieve. It's hard for you to settle for anything less than perfection, and you shouldn't. If you don't to it, who will?

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Consider your options carefully today before you part with a cent. You can one of the expensive items or two of the cheap ones. Is the added cost justifiable? Ponder as long as possible before acting on impulse. You may have to live with this purchase for a long time.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) After a little resistance from a roommate has been overcome, the day is pretty much yours. You can direct the others, since you're the one who knows what should be done. Your passion and enthusiasm might even coax the couch potatoes to join in. Offer them a deal they can't refuse.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You'd like to get away for the weekend, but it looks like an old obligation has got you tied down. You promised you'd do this job someday, and this day is as good as any — better than most. Besides, odds are good the person you promised has you in a hammerlock. Gracefully acquiesce.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) It may be hard to find quiet time for yourself today. Your friends are interested in building something, or making something happen, and they want to drag you along to help. If you have a project of your own, it won't be difficult to work a trade.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You could get into a rip-roaring argument today if you're not careful. The bad news is that you'll never change the other person's opinions, even if they're completely wrong by your standards. The good news is that you might be able to motivate him or her to do something useful. It's worth a try.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Somebody's trying to drag you away on an adventure, and you might as well stop resisting. You may be a little nervous, especially if you've never done anything like this before. But take heart. It's a thin line between fear and excitement, and with faith, you can get to the excitement side pretty easily.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper.

A.F.M. TRADE Thursday, 04-03-99 ACCESS 4646868

| Company | Open | High | Low | Close |
|-----------------|---------|---------|--------|-------|
| BANKS | | | | |
| ARAB BK | 221.000 | 220.250 | -0.34% | |
| NTL BK | 1.420 | 1.420 | 0.00% | |
| BK OF JORDAN | 1.320 | 1.310 | -0.78% | |
| THE HOUSING BK | 2.810 | 2.820 | +0.36% | |
| JO. KUWAIT BK | 1.630 | 1.640 | +0.61% | |
| JO. GULF BK | 0.680 | 0.680 | -1.52% | |
| JO. ISLAMIC BK | 1.690 | 1.690 | 0.00% | |
| PHILADELPHIA BK | 0.520 | 0.520 | 0.00% | |

| | | | |
|-------------|---------|---------|--------|
| BANKS INDEX | 286.430 | point = | -0.23% |
|-------------|---------|---------|--------|

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-------|--------|--|
| INSURANCE | | | | |
| JERUSALEM INS | 1.360 | 1.360 | 0.00% | |
| JO. FRENCH INS | 2.650 | 2.650 | +1.92% | |
| ARAB INS | 1.800 | 2.000 | +5.26% | |
| ARILIA INS | 1.000 | 1.000 | 0.00% | |

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------|---------|--------|
| INSURANCE INDEX | 126.230 | point = | +0.88% |
|-----------------|---------|---------|--------|

| | | | | |
|----------------------|-------|-------|--------|--|
| SERVICES | | | | |
| ELECTRIC POWER | 1.700 | 1.690 | -0.59% | |
| PORTFOLIO SECURITIES | 0.910 | 0.910 | 0.00% | |
| AL-RAI | 7.890 | 7.000 | -0.43% | |
| AL-ZARQA FOR EDU | 0.910 | 0.910 | 0.00% | |
| ARAB INTL FOR INVS. | 1.960 | 1.950 | -0.51% | |
| UNITED FOR FINANCIAL | 1.100 | 1.110 | +0.91% | |

| | | | |
|----------------|---------|---------|--------|
| SERVICES INDEX | 113.940 | point = | -0.27% |
|----------------|---------|---------|--------|

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--|
| INDUSTRY | | | | |
| CEMENT | 3.730 | 3.750 | +0.54% | |
| PHOSPHATE | 2.320 | 2.330 | +0.43% | |
| ARAB POTASH | 4.040 | 4.050 | +0.25% | |
| PETROLEUM REFINERY | 10.800 | 10.800 | 0.00% | |
| THE IND. COMM. & AGRIC | 1.030 | 1.030 | 0.00% | |
| ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL | 3.040 | 3.010 | -0.99% | |
| TOBACCO & CIGARET | 1.480 | 1.480 | -0.67% | |
| INTL STEEL | 0.820 | 0.800 | -3.85% | |
| DAR AL DAWA | 6.140 | 6.100 | -0.65% | |
| MIDDLE EAST COMPLEX | 0.880 | 0.880 | 0.00% | |
| JO. STEEL | 1.020 | 1.020 | 0.00% | |
| LIVESTOCK & POULTRY | 0.410 | 0.400 | -2.44% | |
| INTL IND | 0.380 | 0.380 | 0.00% | |
| PETRO - CHEMICAL | 0.280 | 0.280 | 0.00% | |
| CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE | 1.130 | 1.110 | -1.77% | |
| UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL | 0.800 | 0.840 | +5.00% | |
| NTL CABLE | 0.480 | 0.480 | +4.35% | |
| SUDPRO - CHEMICALS | 0.400 | 0.420 | +5.00% | |
| KAWTHER | 0.340 | 0.320 | -5.88% | |
| EL-ZAY | 1.270 | 1.260 | -0.79% | |
| UNIVERSAL MODERN IND | 0.690 | 0.690 | 0.00% | |
| IND. RESOURCES | 0.420 | 0.420 | 0.00% | |
| NTL ALUMINIUM | 0.790 | 0.790 | 0.00% | |

| | | | |
|----------------|--------|---------|--------|
| INDUSTRY INDEX | 95.660 | point = | +0.17% |
|----------------|--------|---------|--------|

| | | | | |
|------------------------|-------|-------|--------|--|
| PARALLEL | | | | |
| EXPORT BK 75% | 0.950 | 0.950 | 0.00% | |
| JO. TRADING FACILITIES | 0.410 | 0.420 | +2.44% | |
| JO. INTL INS | 0.780 | 0.740 | -5.13% | |
| UNION INVS. CORP | 0.860 | 0.870 | +1.16% | |
| AL - EKBAL | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.00% | |
| ADVANCED PHAR | 0.520 | 0.520 | 0.00% | |
| AL - SHARG | 1.130 | 1.100 | -2.65% | |
| MEDICAL APPLIANCES | 0.440 | 0.440 | 0.00% | |
| AL DAWLAH | 0.680 | 0.680 | +1.54% | |
| ARAB INVSORES | 1.030 | 1.030 | 0.00% | |
| ARAB INTL TRADE | 0.180 | 0.190 | +5.56% | |
| MACHINERY EQUIP | 0.430 | 0.410 | -4.65% | |
| OPTICAL & AUDIAL | 0.380 | 0.380 | -5.71% | |
| CENTURY | 1.200 | 1.190 | -0.83% | |
| NAMICO | 0.180 | 0.180 | +6.67% | |
| MIDDLE EAST PHAR | 0.680 | 0.670 | -1.72% | |
| UNION TOBACCO | 3.700 | 3.800 | +2.70% | |
| UNITED ENG. IND | 0.180 | 0.180 | 0.00% | |
| INTL CERAMIC | 0.360 | 0.370 | +2.78% | |
| PEARL | 0.440 | 0.420 | -4.55% | |
| NTL POULTRY | 0.580 | 0.570 | -1.72% | |
| NUTRI DAR | 0.730 | 0.730 | 0.00% | |

| | | | |
|-------------|--------|---------|--------|
| GRAND INDEX | 182.07 | point = | -0.12% |
|-------------|--------|---------|--------|

Trading at AFM drops by 52.7% but general price index stays at 182 points

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Prices of most shares traded at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) declined last week but the general price index did not register a sharp drop due to the increase in the Arab Bank's share price, a broker said Friday.

The price index closed at 182.07 points at the end of the past week, down from 182.10 a week earlier, the AFM weekly bulletin showed.

The price index of banking and insurance shares rose by 1.11 and 0.89 points respectively while the index for services and industrial shares slipped by 0.85 and 0.65 points respectively.

The bulletin showed that the stock market's turnover declined by 52.7 per cent to JD8.9 million compared from JD18.8 million in the previous week.

The average daily turnover dropped to JD1.5 million, down from JD3.8 million, the seven-page bulletin showed.

Naim Naqeeb, a broker, said gains recorded by the Arab Bank, the AFM's leading blue-chip, compensated losses incurred by the decline in prices of the majority of shares during the last week trading.

The share price of the Arab Bank closed at JD220, up from JD218 in the previous week. The 69-year-old bank won JD1.3 million of the total turnover.

"Based on preliminary indications about the Arab Bank's budget results in 1998, the bank's share price is expected to record further increases in the coming days," Naqeeb said.

He noted that the bank is expected to announce good profit soon when its final results for the past year are released.

The Housing Bank ranked second in the banking sector with a turnover of JD477,660, but its share price declined to JD2.82 in the past week compared to JD2.88 in the previous week.

The banking sector's

share in the turnover amounted to JD2.7 million, or 30.3 per cent.

The industrial sector ranked first with a total turnover of JD4.3 million or 48.3 per cent. Trading in this sector focused on the pharmaceutical and mining firms, with Dar Al Dawa winning a JD1.2 million followed by the Arab Pharmaceutical.

Manufacturing with a turnover of JD598,177 and the Arab Phosphate mines Company, JD545,384.

The services sector ranked third with JD1.6 million, or 18 per cent, and finally the insurance sector with turnover of JD300,000.

The parallel market recorded a turnover of JD1.9 million.

Out of the 90 firms that were traded on the floor, shares of 20 companies recorded increase in their prices, 56 firms registered decline and shares of 14 firms showed no change in their prices.

IBM, Dell announce \$16b 'strategic technology pact'

NEW YORK (AFP) — IBM and Dell Computer Corporation Thursday announced a "strategic technology pact" estimated to be worth \$16 billion.

Under the seven-year deal, believed to be the largest agreement of its kind in the information technology industry, Dell will purchase storage, microelectronics, networking, and display technology from IBM for integration into Dell computer systems.

The agreement also calls for

broad patent cross-licensing between the two companies and collaboration on the development of future product technology, the two firms said in a statement.

Initially, Dell will have access to IBM's high capacity disk drives, network adapter cards, flat panel displays, high performance static random access memory (SRAM) and custom chips.

IBM's personal computer business has suffered over the last several years from a fall in

prices and the appearance on the market of more flexible competitors, such as Dell.

IBM last October created a new organisation, the IBM Technology Group, to investigate new growth opportunities and to boost its presence in the market for original equipment.

IBM is already a major supplier of hard discs, memory chips and liquid crystal screens. Dell, Gateway and Compaq all use IBM hard discs in their portable computers.

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World Indoor Athletics Championships Jackson, Gebrselassie impressive on opening day

MAEBASHI (R) — Colin Jackson, winner of three world indoor silvers, finally won a 60 metres hurdles gold on Friday thanks to a low-dipping finish to a race plagued by false starts.

The women's hurdles final was won by Olga Shishigina of Kazakhstan, the 1995 world indoor silver medalist, who was competing in her first major championships since returning from a two-year drug suspension.

In the 3,000 metres final, Haile Gebrselassie claimed the seventh world title (senior and junior) of his career and possibly his easiest \$50,000 pay-day yet.

But the Ethiopian was never tempted by the carrot of a \$100,000 world record bonus.

Jackson, British holder of the indoor world record, feels that in at least one world indoor final he has been beaten by an athlete who got the better of the starter's equipment.

Starters must now sound a recall if their equipment signals too speedy a reaction and on Friday the starter called three false starts, including one against Jackson, before getting the final underway at the fourth time of asking.

Jackson was quickly away (his reaction time of 0.111 seconds being as close to the limit as possible), but was closely pressed by United States champion Reggie Torian drawn in the next lane.

Both athletes dived for the line. Jackson typically very low, Torian almost sideways with his left arm held high in an attempt to reach the line first.

"You've got to throw yourself at the line when things are that tight," Jackson said.

After referring to the photo-finish, the judges gave the race to 32-year-old Jackson in a championship record 7.38 seconds. Torian (7.40) said he thought he had won the race.

"I'll still think I won it until I see the photo,"



Ethiopians, Haile Gebrselassie (147) and Million Wolde (148), outrun Yonas Kifle of Eritrea (123) who runs one-lap behind as they compete for the final lap of men's 3,000 metres final during the World Indoor Track and Field Championships in Maebashi, northwest of Tokyo. Gebrselassie won the gold medal in 7:53.57 and Wolde finished third in 7:53.79. Kifle was the last in 8:34.41 (AP photo)

Torian said.

Jackson welcomed the new false start rules. "The most important thing for me was that they were recalling the starts, because times have gone by when they've let the starts go. It's a great feeling when they actually recall them," Jackson said.

Only fifth at the penultimate hurdle Shishigina forced her way past Glory Alozie (7.87) and Katie Anderson (7.90) to claim the gold and the \$50,000 first prize in 7.86 seconds.

In the 3,000 metres Gebrselassie made the decisive move with two laps to go, taking Wolde and Bitok with him, and never expended more energy than was necessary to win.

"I didn't want to go too fast because I have the 1,500 metres tomorrow," said the Ethiopian after successfully defending the title he won in Paris two years ago.

Gebrselassie clocked seven minutes 53.57sec, half a minute outside the world record, as Paul Bitok of Kenya (7:53.79)

won yet another silver after outstripping million Wolde of Ethiopia (7:53.85).

"I'm not invincible," Gebrselassie said. "Anyone can beat me if they run faster than I do. The other competitors were not that strong today. The competition is harder in the 1,500 metres."

In the women's high jump Monica Dinescu, the Romanian who was last year's World No. 1 after winning the world cup as well as the European titles, indoors and out, failed to win a medal in bizarre circumstances.

Attempting 1.96 metres for the first time — a height well within the scope of a woman with a best of 2.02 metres — she scraped the bar, but did not dislodge it.

But in dismounting from the bar, she clumsily kicked over one of the uprights, and so had her jump ruled as a foul.

The judges did not view her appeals sympathetically.

Obviously unsettled by the whole affair, Dinescu then failed her next two attempts to her disgust. Her exit left just three athletes in the competition.

Of those, only the unheralded Khristina Kalcheva, 21, of Bulgaria, managed to clear the next height, 1.99 metres (equalling her outdoor best), as the Czech Zuzana Kovacicova-Hlavonova beat America's Tisha Waller on countback.



Britain's Colin Jackson (182), right, and American Reggie Torian of Madison, WI, race side by side in the men's 60-metre hurdles final during the World Indoor Track and Field Championships in Maebashi, northwest of Tokyo. Jackson won the gold medal in 7.38 seconds while Torian was second in 7.40 (AP photo)

Super Mutola may swap running spikes for soccer studs

MAEBASHI (AFP) — Maria Mutola took another stride toward a fourth straight 800m indoor world title on Friday but is already looking to launch a new career in women's football.

The powerful 26-year-old Mozambican clocked 2min 02.96sec to extend her impressive unbeaten record indoors which goes back to 1993 when she won her first world title.

Though first in her heat it was only the sixth fastest time of the women through to the semi-final.

But the African star, who broke the indoor 1,000m world record last month, seemed unconcerned and already has her sights set on the future.

Mutola wants an Olympic gold from the Sydney Games next year — the only major honour she has missed — and is considering soccer as a profession when she retires from running.

"It depends how women's football in Africa develops," she said.

"The standard is getting

better and better and now we have an African championships. Perhaps in three or four years time I will be able to do that, after I have retired from athletics."

Mutola, who played soccer as a child but now heads the champions league in women's middle-distance running, is big fan of European soccer clubs.

"In Europe I get time to watch my favourite sport and I can follow what is going on. I like Manchester United, Barcelona and AC Milan."

What Mutola really wants though is to get the Olympic gold in Sydney. She came third in the final in Atlanta in 1996 when she was weakened by illness.

"What I have missed most is the Olympic Games. I have three world championship titles and three World Cups. I have set my heart on Sydney," she said.

At the 1997 indoor world championships in Paris, Mutola ran with a black ribbon attached to her vest to honour her father who had been killed in a car crash

just weeks before.

But she has brilliantly bounced back from her illness and family dramas.

She ran a 2:30.94 in the 1,000m in Stockholm on February 25 that beat her own world record.

In Maebashi, Mutola could be saving herself for the 800m record of 1:56.40, which has belonged to Christine Wachtel of east Germany for 11 years.

Her strongest competition here will come from 25-year-old Czech Ludmila Formanova, a pupil of 800m world outdoor record holder Jarmila Kratochvilova, who was the fastest qualifier on the Maebashi Green Dome track on Friday in a time of 2:00.49.

Natalya Tsyganova of Russia, 28, was second fastest in 2:00.77. Both will struggle though against the Mozambican powerhouse who after Sunday's final will be heading straight for the television to check on the form of her favourite football teams.



Maria Lurdes Mutola of Mozambique (230) leads Hasna Benhassi (218) of Morocco, American Michelle di Muro-Ave of the Beaverton, OR, (333) and others in the women's 800-metre heat in the World Indoor Track and Field Championships in Maebashi, northwest of Tokyo. All three were qualified for Saturday's semi-final (AP photo)

U.S. protest after Jackson's narrow win

MAEBASHI (AFP) — America's Reggie Torian is demanding a review of the finish of the 60 metres hurdles after Britain's Colin Jackson narrowly won the event at the World Indoor Athletics Championships here on Friday.

Jackson, who has come second at three previous World Indoor Championships, was awarded the title in a championship record time of 7.38sec. Torian was credited with 7.40sec. Falk Balzer of Germany was third in 7.44sec.

But Torian, winner of the U.S. title last weekend, has lodged a protest insisting he had prevailed in the photo finish.

His coach Ed Nuttycombe called for officials to review the computer photograph of the finish.

"There is no way that Reggie was two hundredths of a second behind and I just want to know what happened. That is why I asked the team to demand that the picture be reviewed," said Nuttycombe.

"I threw myself at the line and I lunged like hell," said the 32-year-old Jackson as he celebrated with a Union Jack around his shoulders. He had been blamed for one of three false starts at the start of the tense race.

At a press conference after the race, Torian, who won the U.S. title last weekend said: "At the line I thought I had won it and I still think I won it."

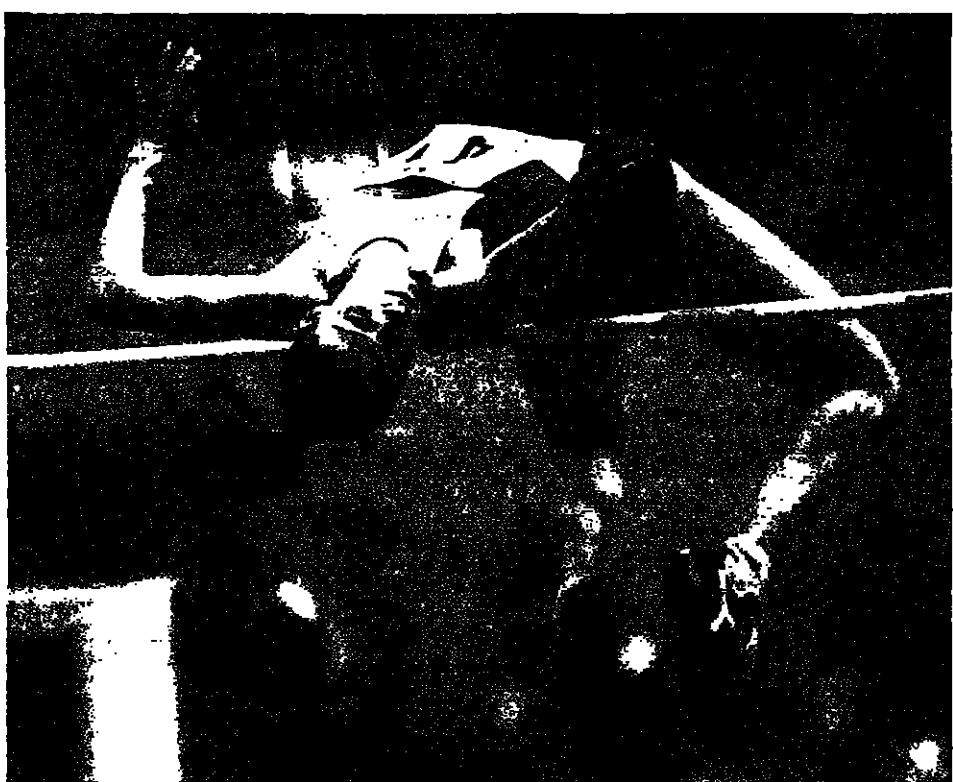
"It was a very tight race from start to finish. It was very hard to separate the two of us."

At the line Torian threw his head and shoulder forward which he said gave him the edge.

Torian insisted there was no personal animosity with Jackson and the two embraced and shook hands at the end of the race.

Jackson was second at Paris in 1997, at Toronto in 1993 and Budapest in 1989.

"I am just so happy that it is now all done and out of the way," said Jackson, before the controversy erupted, whose only other major title was at the outdoor World Championships in 1993.



Khristina Kalcheva of Bulgaria clears the bar on her way to winning the women's high jump during the World Indoor Track and Field Championships in Maebashi, northwest of Tokyo. Kalcheva jumped 1.99 metre for the gold medal (AP photo)

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U.S. protest after Jackson's narrow win

Australian PM rejects British demand that Queen Elizabeth open Games

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australian Prime Minister John Howard on Friday dismissed a suggestion by a British MP that Queen Elizabeth should open the Olympic Games here next year instead of the Australian prime minister.

Gerald Kaufman, head of a British Parliamentary Committee on sports and culture, said the Olympic charter specified the head of state — not head of government — should have the honour of opening the Games.

He also claimed that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) would violate its own charter if Queen Elizabeth II did not open the Sydney Games.

"There is absolutely no way that the prime minister is the head of state of anywhere, including Australia," Kaufman said. "So why is the IOC allowing the charter to be violated by Howard being permitted to open the Games?"

The pro-republican Labour opposition here argues that the queen's Australian representative, Governor-General Sir William Deane, should open the Games.

But Howard, Australia's most prominent monarchist, has said that the prime

minister of the day should take on the role and said in an interview on commercial radio that he was indifferent to Kaufman's view.

"The queen of Australia acts on the advice of her Australian ministers, not on the advice of Kaufman or indeed anybody else. I don't think it's any violation of any rule involved."

Howard said he made his position clear when Sydney won the right to hold the Games and when Labour's Paul Keating was prime minister.

"I just think it appropriate that the prime minister of the day should open the Olympic Games," he said, adding that he did not intend to offend the queen.

He also rejected suggestions that British athletes might boycott the Games if they felt the queen had been snubbed. "Let me make a prediction — there'll be a very large British team here," he said.

Howard has promised a referendum at the end of this year to decide if Australia should sever its two-century link to the British throne.

Hingis defends title at Evert Cup

INDIAN WELLS (AFP) — World No. 1 Martina Hingis returns to defend her title at the \$1.25 million WTA Tour Evert Cup which starts here on Friday.

Like all of the top eight seeds, Hingis has a first round bye in the tournament, which will run concurrently with the first of the ATP Tour's prestigious Super Nine events of 1999, the Champions Cup, which starts on Monday.

Hingis comes into the tournament off a quarter-final defeat in Paris last week by France's Amelie Mauresmo, the woman she beat to capture her fifth Grand Slam singles title at the Australian Open in January.

Serena Williams, fresh from her first WTA Tour victory in Paris last week, will play singles. She drew a qualifier in the first round but if she gets over the first hurdle faces a tough second-round match against second-seeded American Lindsay Davenport.

Davenport won the title here in 1997 and went on to capture her first Grand Slam singles title in 1998 — the U.S. Open — to grab the World No. 1 ranking from Hingis.

Hingis regained the top spot on February 8, and remained 225 points ahead of Davenport in the latest rankings released on Monday.

Serena's elder sister Venus Williams, who won her second straight Oklahoma City title on Sunday to complete the WTA Tour's first such triumphant sister act, will play doubles only as she prepares to defend her title at the Lipton Championships later in March.

The top eight seeds: 1. Martina Hingis (Swi), 2. Lindsay Davenport (U.S.), 3. Monica Seles (U.S.), 4. Jana Novotna (Cze), 5. Steffi Graf (Ger), 6. Mary Pierce (Fra), 7. Amanda Coetzer (Rsa), 8. Nathalie Tauziat (Fra)

Sampras knocked out of Scottsdale Classic

SCOTTSDALE (AFP) — Jan-Michael Gambill stayed cool under pressure from Pete Sampras to knock the World No. 1 out of the second round 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the \$350,000 ATP Tour event here Thursday.

"I feel great," Gambill beamed. "It's obviously the biggest win of my life and against the player whom I think is the best in the game. It's huge for me, it's the toughest I've ever stayed in a match."

Sampras looked to be on his way to scoring a third victory over his fast-rising 21-year-old compatriot.

But Gambill showed poise as he ignored third-set heroics from the top seed, who saved two break points in the seventh game, escaping a dangerous moment to take 4-3 lead on serve.

Two games later, the youngster moved to 5-4 lead after Sampras could only save the first of a triple break point.

Gambill rallied as he served for the match, getting into trouble but saving two break points himself. The World No. 45 fired a backhand winner down the line to seal Sampras' fate after one hour, 36 minutes.

"I played him last summer at Cincinnati and he played well," said Sampras trying to downplay the significance of the defeat. "He's beaten some good players in the last year."

Sampras, in his 261st week as World No. 1, has just nine weeks to go to tie the all-time mark held by Ivan Lendl.

But he is under threat from Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov, who is idle this week.

"It's disappointing. I had some chances, but I had some loose service games," added Sampras, who had won his last eight matches against fellow Americans. "I was being aggressive, but he got in some good passing shots. He was pretty solid."

"I felt good going into the match. I thought I could have played a little better. The thing I need at the moment is matches."

Sampras and Gambill duelled on level terms in the first set, with both men firing over stinging returns. Sampras nosed ahead as he broke his younger compatriot for a 5-4 lead and then served out the set.

Gambill parlayed one service break into a 3-0 lead in the second as he leveled the match at one set apiece.

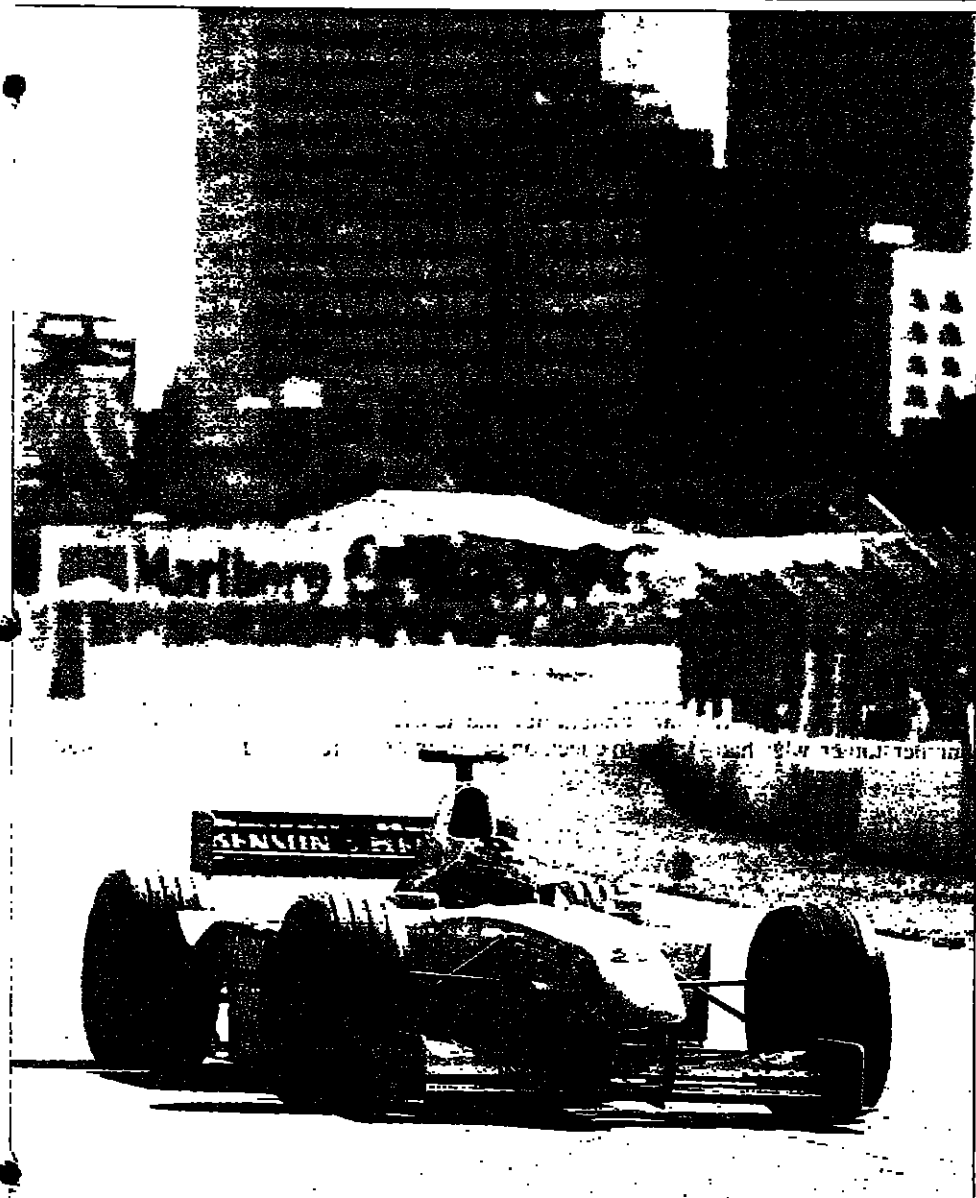
On Friday, Gambill faces American Justin Gimelstob, a 7-6 (7/5), 6-2 winner over Spain's Fernando Vicente.

Fourth-Seeded Croatian Goran Ivanisevic headed for the practice courts to work on his serve after earning a ragged 6-4, 6-4 win against Argentine Hernan Gumy 6-4, 6-4.

Ivanisevic couldn't count on his trademark big serve, producing a mere seven aces in the 71-minute battle while hitting a low 41 percentage on first serves. He saved the only break point he faced in the match.

"I wasn't serving so bad, but I didn't really need to do much," Ivanisevic said. "He was standing so far back and there was enough wind so that he had no chance to return."

The fourth seed, whose last appearance here was a decade ago, next plays one of the oldest men still in the singles game, 33-year-old Mark Woodforde. The Aussie advanced with a 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 win over Spain's Francisco Clavet, aged 30.



Heinz-Harald Frentzen from Germany drives his Jordan-Mugen Honda during the first practice session against the backdrop of the city of Melbourne, Friday. The Australian Formula One Grand Prix will be raced Sunday (AP photo)

Hakkinen unhurt as McLaren slams into wall

MELBOURNE (AFP) — World champion Mika Hakkinen walked away unscathed from his mangled McLaren after a high-speed crash late in practice here Friday for the Australian Formula One Grand Prix.

The car was a wreck after Hakkinen, nearly killed when he crashed in qualifying for the Australian Grand Prix four years ago, lost control on the final bend into the home straight and slammed sideways into a wall.

The body of the McLaren Mercedes was extensively battered, particularly the right rear in the crash which halted the second practice session 11 minutes from the scheduled end.

Team boss Ron Dennis said the crash would not be too much of a problem for McLaren.

"It was just youthful exuberance and it's nothing too serious," he said.

Up to the crash, Hakkinen had been setting the pace and was ahead of the field by almost half a second.

But when the wreckage was cleared and the session resumed,

McLaren teammate David Coulthard ripped under the world champion's time by 0.014 seconds to record one minute 31.971 seconds on the 5.302-kilometre Albert Park Track.

During qualifying for the 1995 Australian Grand Prix at Adelaide, Hakkinen's skull fractured from ear to ear when his car launched into the air from a kerb at 270 kph and crashed into a tyre and concrete barrier. The impact stopped him breathing, doctors performing a tracheotomy at the scene.

Hakkinen was one of the first patients in the world to benefit from a new ultrasound brain blood-oxygen supply technique, invented by two of the doctors who tended to him on the track.

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Pistons smash Cavs for sixth straight win

CLEVELAND (R) — Grant Hill scored 28 points and Joe Dumars added 21 as the Detroit Pistons smashed the Cleveland Cavaliers 99-84 on Thursday for their sixth straight victory.

Hill was 6-of-11 from the field and 16-of-19 from the line, snapping out of a recent slump. He averaged only 13.0 points in his previous five contests.

Dumars was 8-of-10 from the field, including 3-of-4 from 3-point range, helping the Pistons shoot 62 per cent (34-of-55) from the field.

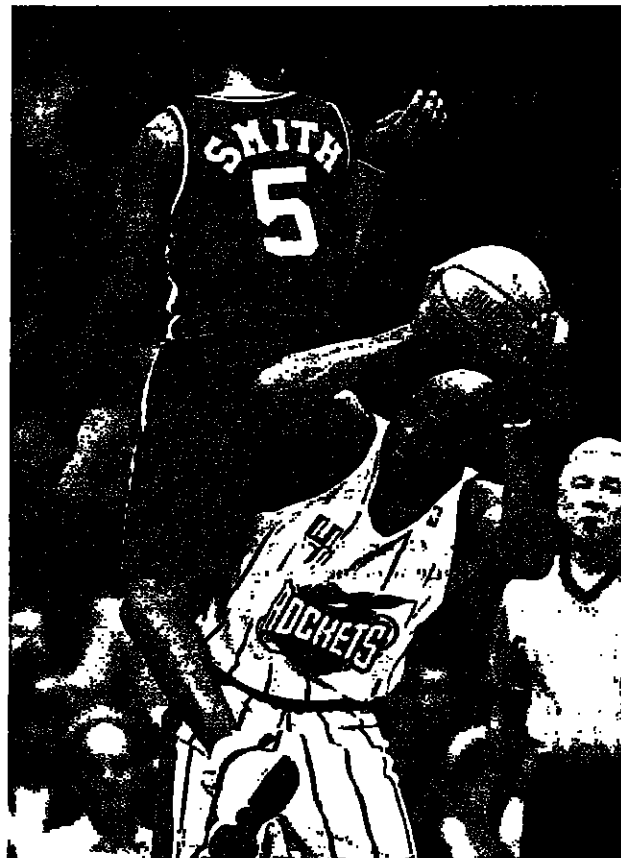
"I think we are in better rhythm," Hill said. "We're passing the ball well, we're starting to know each other and we're starting to trust each other. I guess." "We're playing with a lot of confidence right now," added Detroit coach Alvin Gentry. "When our backcourt plays that way — I consider grant to be a backcourt guy — we're a pretty darn good team." while Hill is Detroit's leading scorer and marquee player, Dumars has made the difference for the Pistons, who moved into sole possession of second place in the Central Division.

Lindsay Hunter added 18 points and credited Dumars, who has announced he will retire at the end of the season.

"I think he's been more vocal with me than ever," Hunter said.

At New Jersey, Chuck Person scored 21 points and Bobby Phills 20 as the Charlotte Hornets pounded the Nets 96-82 in a battle of the worst two teams in the Eastern Conference.

Minutes after debuting a metallic gray jersey — the first sleeveless T-shirt in NBA history — the Nets fell behind by 17 points and never recovered, losing one of their best players and their 12th game in 15 tries this season. Only the winless Clippers have a worse record. Charlotte is now 4-10.



Los Angeles Clippers Lorenzen Wright (L) lands on Houston Rockets Charles Barkley's shoulder after Barkley faked him out on a play during third quarter action. Barkley, who was fouled on the play, led all scorers with 21 points and 13 rebounds as the Rockets beat the Clippers 96-77 at the Compaq Centre in Houston (Reuters photo)

Jayson Williams, the league's fourth-leading rebounder, became the latest in a list of walking wounded for New Jersey, injuring his left thumb in the first half. Williams, who had no points and one rebound in 11 minutes, did not return.

In Seattle, Supersonics coach Paul Westphal, facing the Phoenix Suns for the first time since they fired him three years ago, watched his team fall to its Pacific Division rivals 101-93.

Jason Kidd collected an NBA season-high 19 assists, including 11 in the second half, during which the Suns shot 57

per cent (20-of-35) and made 4-of-6 from three-point range. Rex Chapman scored 23 points and Tom Gugliotta 18 for Phoenix.

Detlef Schrempf scored 22 points to lead Seattle, which saw superstar guard Gary Payton have his worst game of the season.

Payton, averaging 24.1 points entering the contest, handed out 11 assists but scored only nine points on 3-of-16 shooting.

In Atlanta, Dee Brown scored 16 points as the Toronto Raptors snapped a six-game road losing streak with their first-ever victory over the

Hawks 86-77.

The Hawks had won all 12 previous meetings with the Raptors. Toronto's victory leaves Indiana as the last of the other 14 Eastern Conference teams with a perfect record against the Raptors since they entered the league in 1995-96.

In Dallas, Tim Duncan scored 26 points and grabbed 12 rebounds as the San Antonio Spurs beat the Mavericks 95-79.

The Spurs have reeled off eight straight wins against the Mavericks, including four in a row at Reunion Arena.

David Robinson had 20 points and eight rebounds and Jaren Jackson added a season-high 16 points off the bench for the Spurs (8-8), who have posted back-to-back wins to climb back to .500 in what has been an inconsistent season.

In Houston, rookie Michael Dickerson scored nine of his 20 points in the pivotal third quarter as the Rockets rolled to another victory over the woeful Los Angeles Clippers, 96-77.

Charles Barkley had 21 points and 12 rebounds and Hakeem Olajuwon 17 and nine for the Rockets, who have won eight straight against the Clippers and 22 of the last 24 meetings.

Los Angeles has only one win in its last 23 trips to Houston.

In Miami, Terry Porter led a huge effort by the Heat bench, collecting 16 points, seven assists and five rebounds in a 95-87 victory over the Denver Nuggets.

Porter, in his team-high 14th NBA season, did not commit a turnover and was part of a Miami bench that outscored Denver's reserves 35-2.

In Vancouver, Kevin Gammett scored 23 points as the Minnesota Timberwolves survived a 4 1/2-minute scoring drought in the fourth quarter and held on for a 102-93 victory over the Grizzlies.

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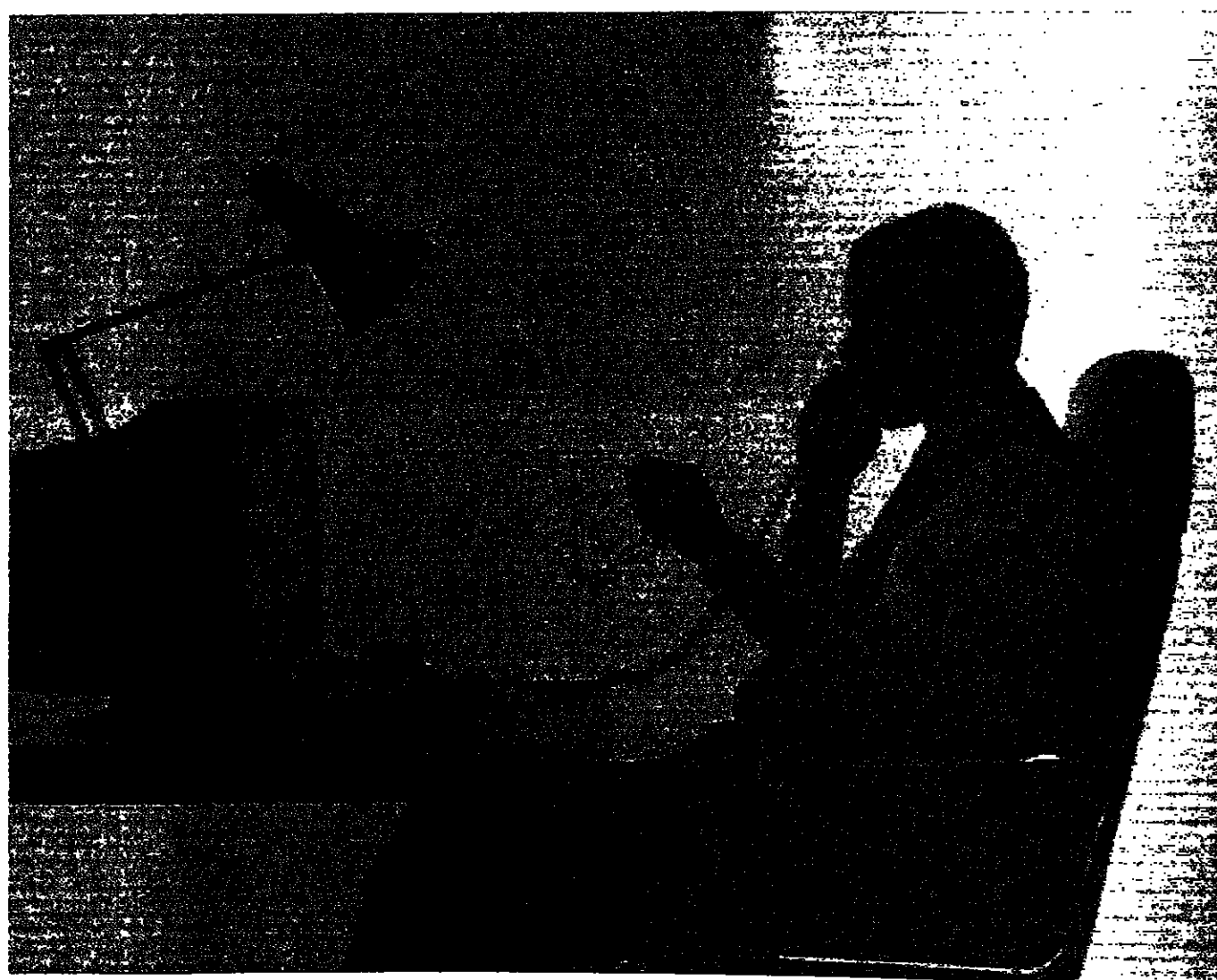
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